

# Maclean's

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THE CANADIAN  
FORCES IN SOMALIA

**SPECIAL REPORT**

## WHAT'S WRONG AT SCHOOL?



● Why Many  
Parents Give  
Failing Grades To  
Their Children's  
Teachers



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# Maclean's

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## COVER

## WHAT'S WRONG AT SCHOOL?

*Across Canada, alarmed parents have declared war on provincial public education systems that they say are doing a poor job. In response, every province and territory has conducted official reviews of how well they teach elementary and high school. The findings are nearly unanimous: far too many students do not learn to read or write well, while others simply drop out.*

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## WORLD

## AFRICAN RELIEF

*A contingent of 845 Canadian soldiers faced with 40°C heat and scorpions as they settled into the isolated Somali community of Duket Meer, joining an international campaign to supply food in a starving nation. They quickly set up night-vision checkpoints and began escorting food convoys.*

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## BUSINESS

## GETTING ON BOARD

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# A Search For Standards

Increasingly, parents, and Canadians generally, are expressing disillusionment with the quality of public primary and secondary education in Canada. They are concerned that their children are not learning to read and write well enough. Businessmen say that they have trouble finding literate graduates, and some teachers complain that instead of teaching, they are forced to carry out social agendas developed by politicians and bureaucrats. A common element running through the debate is the fear that today's schoolchildren will not be equipped to thrive as adults in an increasingly competitive international environment.

In an attempt to address that concern, all 10 provinces and the two territories have formally renewed their education systems. But no sweeping solutions have emerged. Some provinces plan to put more emphasis on core subjects and testing, while others want to make their systems more accountable for students, encouraging them to stay in school. Clearly, what is lacking is a national set of goals and standards that all provinces endorse—and strive to achieve. This year, all of the provinces, except Saskatchewan, will take part in a national program to test 13- and 16-year-old students in mathematics, reading and writing. It will be the first time that students across the country have participated in a standard, provincially organized test. And the results will tell Canadians how students in each province rank on a national basis. The test could prove to be the first step towards the eventual establishment of national goals for every public education system in the country.



Ronest (left) and Sharay, an essential step towards a single public education system for all

Senior Writer Tom Ronest wrote the main story introducing the 13-page cover package on what is right and what is wrong with today's system, a subject that Maclean's is giving long-range, high-priority coverage. Assistant Art Director John Storey co-ordinated the layouts and helped to produce the charts and graphs that accompany the articles.

*Kevin Wyle*

## Maclean's

CANADA'S WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE

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# OPENING NOTES

Canada and Clinton, *Aladdin* takes on *A Few Good Men* and the pick of 1992 movies

## HAIL TO THE CHEF

Few shoppers in most parts of Canada are all too familiar with David Nechel, the upstart grocery executive who appears on print and television ads for President's Choice products—everything from "Tasty Dry Dog Food" to "Decadent" chocolate chip cookies. But in the United States, where the company distributes the President's Choice line through 11 grocery chains in 34 states, many consumers appear to be confused about the origin of the brand name. Far too often, Nechel does not appear in any of the products' U.S. publicity. "I thought it was a reference to the President of the United States," said Brian Dunneley, 35, a New York City lawyer. Indeed, not grocery chain, Canadian, Nechel-based Star Market tried to capitalize on the confusion by running a newspaper ad on Nov. 3, the day U.S. voters went to the polls to elect a new president. The ad featured a photo of the White House with the caption, "Anything to eat around here besides broccoli?" Thomas Stephens, a vice-president of Loblaw International Merchants in Toronto, which distributes the products, said that company executives were angered by the ad. But he added, "Hopefully, Americans won't change their mind about President's Choice the way they did with their president."



Nechel: confusion in the United States

## UNBINDING THE TIES?

With the inauguration of presidential Bill Clinton on Jan. 20, the special relationship that Canada has long enjoyed with the United States may fade away as quickly as George Bush, Jr. James Leno, director of the Canadian-American Committee of the Washington-based National Planning Association, warns that "there may be changes in the U.S. state Department that Canada should watch." Indeed, there is speculation in Washington that Clinton will not replace Bob Ross, the deputy assistant secretary of state for Canada, whose term expires this month. Said



Canadian election and a new leader. And there is Clinton will take it all more seriously."

Leno: "Even if they do replace him, the very fact that they are considering that does so may be an indication that Canada, while still important, may now be perceived as less important." Canada's former ambassador to the United Nations, Stephen Lewis, offers another explanation. Said Lewis, "Clinton will understand that there has been a long-term leader destined to defeat. Our relationships with the United States are not likely to change until there is a new leader. And then there is Clinton will take it all more seriously."

## DIFFERENT DREAMS

Since its inception in 1989, the annual *Maclean's* year-end poll has underscored again and again the different attitudes and beliefs of Canadians from various parts of the country. The latest edition of the survey shows that there are regional differences even in Canadians' most personal concerns. As reported in the Jan. 4 *Maclean's* (on sale until Jan. 20), the most popular wish among the 1,500 Canadians surveyed was for "inner peace"—chosen by 36 per cent of the sample, while 30 per cent chose "youth and health" and 29 per cent chose "financial security." But the responses to that question were unevenly distributed. Prairie residents were most likely to wish for inner peace, at 45 per cent, while Atlantic Canadians were least likely, at 20 per cent. Overall, inner peace was the most popular choice of respondents in British Columbia, the Prairies and Ontario. But in Quebec, youth and health topped the list. And in the Atlantic provinces, inner peace ranked significantly lower than financial security—proving that even in their dreams, Canadians have markedly different ideas of what constitutes happiness.



## POP MOVIES

Top movies in Canada, ranked according to box-office receipts during the seven days ending on Dec. 29. (In brackets: number of screens/weeks shown)

1. *Aladdin* (116/5) \$2,026,200
2. *A Few Good Men* (97/5) \$1,340,790
3. *Home Alone 2* (106/4) \$1,260,770
4. *The Bodyguard* (91/5) \$998,000
5. *Forever Young* (95/2) \$276,700
6. *The Top Gun* (75/2) \$269,000
7. *The Disappearance of Gendarme* (81/4) \$201,300
8. *Bye, Bye, Bye* (84/2) \$187,300
9. *The Mighty Christmas Gaid* (71/4) \$156,000
10. *Top of the Rock* (77/2) \$153,000

(Source: exhibitors' reports)

## THE YEAR IN PICTURES

The 10 best movies of 1992, as chosen by *Maclean's* critic Brian D. Johnson

1. *Aladdin* Jewi-Claude Lussan's quest for a heart of gold is a portrait of the artist as a young dreamer in working-class Montreal. Comic, poetic, optimistic—and sometimes borrowing. A marvellous lesson of autobiography and surreal fantasy that evokes nostalgia for the golden age of the European art film.



2. *Undercover* An elegant tragedy about a man who is a double agent. Clint Eastwood shows up in a classic, including his own hand in the game. Crack pace of co-stars Gene Hackman, Morgan Freeman and Christopher Walken is not just a Western. The last word on the western.

3. *Genghis Khan* Death of a Scoundrel for the 1990s. A career crowning performance from Jack Lemmon and a brilliant turn from Al Pacino who shows through David Mamet's raw dialogue with the grace of a world chef.

4. *Basquiat and Miles* Despite critic life-art parallels, the movie transcends the gossip. Max Puro looks like hell, but Woody Allen writes him some beautiful lines ("You can see in your every emotion but love"). Playing her nobility by satirical wit, Judy Davis is priceless.

5. *The Crying Game* The thriller that everyone is not talking about—for fear of missing a brilliant plot twist. A story of love, politics and sexual identity, created with sensitivity and caused by Irish writer-director Neil Jordan. Excellent performances from Stephen Rea and Jaye Davidson.

6. *Naked Lunch* Canadian director David Cronenberg's brave and impressive adaptation of the William S. Burroughs novel that was deemed unfilmable. Hats off to the master typewriter creature with alluring splinters. (Available on video.)

7. *The Best Intentions* Ingeborg Bergman expands the frontier of personal life-making by writing about his personal marriage before his birth. Superbly directed by Bille August. A movie with the emotional history of a line novel. Great-great winner at Cannes.

8. *The Player* Robert Altman's ravings on Hollywood. A delectable satire of the comic business of a writer with a Who's who of canons. Makes a player of actor Tim Robbins.



9. *Malcolm X* The movie about a baseball bat, but Spike Lee defies not only to depict Hollywood's first African-American male in a black suit. Even in some respects, but Denzel Washington's performance deserves the Oscar.

10. *Close My Eyes* A small but brilliant movie about brotherly love, about having the mantle. Jon Bonjovi. The best movie about modern British decadence since *Blue Is*, and the best movie about brotherly love since *Tommy* in Paris. (Available on video.)



## PASSAGES

**GRANTED:** Generosity, to convicted murderer and former socialist Jean Harris, 68, after almost 12 years in prison for the gangster slaying of her lover, Dr. Bernice Turner, millionaire widow of the best-selling *The Complete Strindberg* novelist. Dated by New York State Gov. Mario Cuomo, who cited her exemplary behavior and prison work. Harris's doctor told her about the decision just before she underwent seven hours of successful heart surgery. Turner had become smitten with another woman, 22 years Harris's junior.

**DEED:** Businessman and philanthropist Sydney Harman, 79, whose Imperial Optical company dominated the Canadian eyewear industry for decades of a heart attack, at his Toronto home. He died on the same day that his former company was forced into receivership because of an \$84-million debt to the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. He had expressed sadness at the move.

**DEED:** Computer pioneer and educator John Krammer, 66, of a heart attack, at hospital in Lebanon, N.H. A former research assistant to physicist Albert Einstein, Krammer served for 11 years as president of Dartmouth College in Hanover, N.H. He was co-inventor of one of the most widely used computer languages in the world, Basic.

**DEED:** American writer Kay Boyle, 96, whose career spanned expatriate Paris in the 1920s and the avant-garde movement of the 1960s; in hospital in Mill Valley, Calif. She wrote 30 books of fiction and a memoir of her Paris years, a company that included Samuel Beckett and James Joyce, and fellow writer Gertrude Stein.

**DEED:** Former Major League baseball pitcher Sal (The Barber) Maglie, 73, of complications from liver-related problems, in a New York City hospital. Notorious for giving batters close shaves with his fast-bustling curveball, he played for five teams, including all three New York baseball clubs: the New York Giants, their archrival Brooklyn Dodgers and the New York Yankees.

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## COLUMN



## A call for a new King Solomon

BY DIANE FRANCIS

A self-employment remains a problem during the latest economic downturn around the world, politicians in Canada, the United States and elsewhere call for more training programs to shift workers from employed sectors to those with bright prospects. The problem, where is the King Solomon out there is the education or political realm who can tell our society which skills in which sector and in what numbers will be needed? Politicians and educators are probably the least capable of distinguishing "winning" from "losing" industries, mostly because, as servants in the public sector, they are totally removed from the commercial world. Even entrepreneurs and company presidents cannot be counted on to tell which that will guarantee success in the future. Witness how the corporate landscape is littered with the corpses of those who guessed wrong.

That is why politicians and so-called industry strategists are not the way to help Canada make the transition to whatever the future holds. The best way is to give Canadians who are basically entrepreneurial, the tools to help forge their own opportunities.

After all, not everyone can, or wants to, become an electronics engineer or software designer. Although these professions will be in demand for years to come, economies will need for more people who can start new dry-cleaning establishments, restaurants, doughnut shops and bookstores, or who import doorknobs from the Third World, speculate in packaging products from abroad or who can sell vintage farm advice tractors. And thousands for each undertaking, not to mention the sense of satisfaction, can be great for those who work hard, and work smart. That is why, out of necessity and chance, increasing numbers of people throughout the advanced world are going into business on their own.

Between 1979 and 1994, self-employment jumped 37 million workers or 19 per cent of the total employment in all 24 nations that belong to the Organization for Economic Co-

*Amid the search for opportunities, see how the corporate landscape is now littered with the corpses of those who guessed wrong*

operation and Development (OECD). Of the new entrants, more than half have opted to be self-employed by leaving an existing job, according to the OECD's 1995 Employment Outlook. Only about 20 per cent came from the ranks of the unemployed.

Self-employment varies greatly from country to country surveyed. In Canada, the self-employed represent 7.4 per cent of our entire workforce, compared to 6.7 per cent in 1979. Self-employed are 23.3 per cent self-employed, Spain 17.1, Australia 12.4, Belgium 11.6, Japan 11.1, France 10.3, Germany 7.7, the United States 7.6 and Sweden seven. In most OECD countries, the rate of self-employment growth outpaced total employment growth.

That is why the most enlightened training policy a government can deliver is to give the unemployed, or anyone else, the generic skills to enable them to be self-employed. It's not a complicated curriculum: how to keep a set of books, deal with regulations, tax collectors, employees, suppliers, bankers, landlords and lawyers. Would-be entrepreneurs should also take a basic training course on how to sell, how to read financial statements, the business press and macroeconomic indicators, how to prepare loan requests, budgets and strategies.

Along with the training, or leaders, manage cash flow and analyze a business's or product's prospects. I would also throw in an afternoon on the 10 most common reasons for business failure plus another afternoon on how to sell a business unit.

In short, more people should be taught the basics of entrepreneurship. Critics would say these skills aren't worth a damn because the ability to spot opportunities or live with risk are not traits that can be taught in a classroom. That is true, but many a risk-taker has failed miserably because he had never mastered, not been told that he should, the basic skills that are required to run one's own affairs successfully.

Besides the trend toward self-employment, the report points out some other interesting facts. The self-employed tend to work longer hours than full-time workers who work for someone else. That may be because many employed people are overpaid for the amount of work they perform. After all, employers are increasingly satisfied with obligations to pay workers for obtaining holders, vacation pay, sick pay and maternity or other leaves even though they perform no work. Meanwhile, the self-employed stop making money on holidays and while on vacation or otherwise indisposed.

That is why it is not surprising that the OECD finds that countries with high self-employment percentages also have high social security charges imposed on employers, including health, pension or other schemes. If such charges exceed productivity gains, people are thrown out of work or forced to become self-employed. In other words, we are killing off workers with our imposed burdens. On the other hand, lower pay among the self-employed can be misleading because they enjoy such tax breaks as writing off entertainment, transportation or depreciation costs against income. While legitimate, such benefits artificially reduce reported earnings.

Perhaps most significantly, the OECD found that governments who trained and partially subsidized the unemployed, so that they could become self-employed, fared the best. In this case, the statistics show that 500,000 unemployed people started new businesses between 1983 and 1990, representing nearly a quarter of all workers turning to self-employment.

I would suggest that a disproportionate percentage of self-employed persons in rich countries are immigrants from poor countries. Self-employment is more necessary for immigrants because new arrivals have greater difficulties finding employment. All other things being equal, such newcomers, they lack a network, or relatives to help them. Besides, many lack the social or linguistic skills, or an adequate comparable business or diploma. Immigrants drive cabs, manage convenience stores, run restaurants and bookend stalls, and the like.

Supporting the unemployed forever or embarking on costly retraining programs that may be outdated or inappropriate is financially impossible, as in the talk of choosing winners and losers. That is why the best curriculum around to train Canadians how to cope with the future is to teach them how to be their own boss.



Taipei: some parliamentarians say that it is a conflict of interest for federal politicians to accept free travel

## CANADA

# ORIENTAL EXPRESS

**T**he first-class accommodations softened the rigors of the 11-hour journey to the other side of the world. The travellers—a handful of Canadian MPs and some of their wives—flew business class from Toronto to Taiwan and then spent seven nights in Taipei's luxurious Grand Hyatt hotel, courtesy of the Taiwanese government and its agencies. But on the first day of the 1991 trip, part of an ongoing Taiwanese effort to cultivate contacts among Canadian politicians, one of the MPs discovered just how far hospitality extended. When the group arrived at the hotel, the Taiwanese door guide told him that if he had any "extra needs" he should see a bellboy in the lobby. Later, the bellboy himself asked the MP if he wanted private company. Recalled the MP, who says that he declined the offer only: "The guy told me, 'You can have anything you like—white, Chinese or Malaysian.'"

That option is among the least publicized benefits sometimes offered to members of

## THERE IS A REASON WHY SO MANY OF CANADA'S FEDERAL POLITICIANS TRAVEL TO TAIWAN: THE FREEBIES

Parliament who embark on fact-finding trips to Taiwan, currently the most popular guest destination for federal politicians. While countries such as South Korea, South Africa and Israel have traditionally sponsored such trips to win friends among elected officials, Taiwan has been particularly aggressive. Since 1988, when the House of Commons began keeping a

public record of sponsored foreign travel by MPs, the Taiwanese government and affiliated agencies such as the Taiwan Chamber of Commerce have organized at least 59 individual visits to the country by 35 Conservative and Liberal MPs. According to the official agency, the next most popular destination, Israel, drew 32 visitors from the House of Commons.

The MPs who have visited Taiwan, some more than once, say that the trips are worthwhile because they allow them to cultivate links with the island nation's 20 million people. For other parliamentarians, the trip is a conflict of interest for politicians to accept free travel. New Democrat MP Philip Edmondson, for one, says that he has declined three trips to countries such as Japan because he wants to avoid any hint of impropriety. "These governments are our charitable agencies," Edmondson said. "Their purpose is to affect the judgement of a member of Parliament. They are effectively trying to buy their support."

Mark Cheng, director of Taiwan's Economic

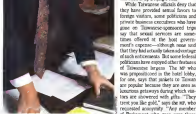
and Cultural Office in Toronto, dismisses such concerns. He says that his government's aim is to promote cultural and commercial ties between Canada and Taiwan. "We Chinese treat people generally, and provide hospitality among people," says Cheng. "We want to educate Canadians about the economic opportunities for them in our country."

Another strong supporter of travel to Taiwan is Conservative William Atwell, alternate financial services executive who represents the Toronto-area island of Muskoka. As the chairman of the Canada-Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group, an organization of parliamentarians founded by former Tory MP Robert Gowers in 1983, Atwell is effectively in charge of a small private network, determining which politicians receive invitations to visit Taiwan at that country's expense. "It is an area of the world where you are otherwise

confronting to be a diplomatic curiosity. Western nations recognized the island nation as the legitimate government of China after two million nationalists sought refuge there in the wake of mainland China's 1949 Communist revolution. But in 1979, Canada made a head-on decision to cut diplomatic ties with Taiwan and recognize Beijing as the seat of China's government. In subsequent years, about 70 countries followed suit, and in political terms Taiwan has become increasingly isolated. Today, it is recognized by only 26 nations.

But diplomatic isolation has not prevented the government of Taiwan from engineering an economic miracle. A pensioner age, Taiwan was a recipient of foreign aid, today it distributes it. Taiwan's per capita income, which stood at a mere \$823 in 1976, is now \$9,015 compared with \$23,800 in Canada. The country also possesses the world's largest reserves of foreign exchange—\$196 billion.

Taking advantage of its increasing economic strength, Taiwan in the late 1970s began to mount political projects, starting by inviting elected officials from Canada—and other Western nations—to visit. And while Cheng insists that he has never pressed his Canadian guests to lobby on behalf of Taiwan, he acknowledges that his country would like Canada to reinstate diplomatic recognition. Said Richard Bonick, a Toronto insurance broker who does business in Taiwan and has organized trips there on behalf of the island's government: "The MPs are being used to wave the flag for Taiwan and stick it up Beijing's rear."



Atwell: playing a controversial role

ably believed as an MP," says Atwell, who has accepted those three trips to Taiwan. "Taiwan is booming, and you're not going to get a piece of that business unless people of a fairly high stature visit the country." He added that, during other trips, lobbying by MPs helped Western, United States Maritime Financial open an office in Taiwan.

In fact, Taiwan is approaching the next century as an economic powerhouse—while

White Taiwanese officials deny that they have provided actual favors to foreign visitors, some politicians and private business executives who have come on Taiwanese-sponsored trips say that special services are sometimes offered at the host government's expense—although none said that they had actually taken advantage of such entitlements. But several federal politicians have expressed their doubts of Taiwanese largesse. The MP who was propositioned in the hotel lobby, for one, says that packets to Taiwan are popular because they are seen as lucrative giveaways during which visitors are showered with gifts. "They treat you like gold," says the MP, who requested anonymity. "Any member of Parliament who goes over there comes back with at least \$5,000 worth of personal gifts."

The MP said that he returned from Taiwan with two extra suitcases filled with silk ties, boots, watches and gold pens, jewelry, and silk clothing for his wife. He added that when his group passed through Taipei's huge international trade center, the Taiwanese customs officers purchased suits for him, when they stopped to admire them. One colleague, the MP said, accepted a \$600 piece of art. Taiwanese officials, and some MPs who have

## National Notes

### SAVING WHO

The B.C. Supreme Court ruled that Joe Rodriguez does not have the constitutional right to have a doctor help her combat AIDS. Rodriguez, 40, who suffers from the degenerative and terminal neurological illness commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease, has been fighting for the right to end her life. The Victoria woman, who has been told by doctors that she has less than a year and a half to live, will appeal the ruling.

### TIGHTENING THE NET

Immigration Minister Bernard Valcourt imposed new visa requirements aimed at slowing the flow of refugee claimants to Canada. The action followed the arrival of a record number of air travellers from the former Soviet Union who claimant refugee status during refueling stops in Gander, Nfld.—more than 2,300 in 1992. Refuge advocates complained that the new regulations will make it harder for legitimate refugees to seek asylum in Canada.

### NATIVE MORTALITY

A new study indicated that natives are twice as likely as other Canadians to die before the age of 65 and three times as likely to die violently. Study co-author Dr. Yvan H. Hachin and Nelson Canada's epidemiology department said that the findings underscore the need to improve living conditions among natives. "The key is education," he said, "and this is an area where we can do a lot more."

### STILL BLAMING

Federal Health and Welfare officials said that convicted war criminal Jacob Latjau, who was strapped of his Canadian citizenship and extradited to his native Netherlands last year, is still eligible to receive benefits under the Canada Pension Plan. Latjau, 73, who arrived in Canada in 1961 from Paraguay, was convicted in 1948 of war crimes in the Netherlands. Now in a Dutch prison, he contracted the Canada Pension Plan for 26 years while teaching biology at the University of British Columbia.

### EXTENDED EVACUATION

The 480 residents of Gollville, Minn., evacuated from their homes after a 2.6 15 train derailed that caused a toxic chemical spill near the town, learned that they will have to remain away from their homes for at least another week. Provincial officials said that crews are still unloading hazardous chemicals from the train, and that residents will not be allowed to return, 45 km west of Winnipeg, until that task is completed.



travelling to the country, say that such accounts are greatly exaggerated. "I've given a lot at a steel camp, and somebody else gave me an umbrella," says Toronto-area Conservative MP Alan Rock, who visited Taiwan in 1994 at the expense of the Taiwanese government. Added Derek Lee, a Liberal MP from Toronto who has taken two free trips to Taiwan since he entered the House of Commons in 1988: "I remember some souvenir items, but there is nothing I received that I would remember having said, 'Wow! What a great gift!'"

Although most MPs categorize the trips to Taiwan as official business, they almost always accept the standing Taiwanese invitation to bring their spouses. Attenwell, who has taken his wife to Taiwan every year, says that Mrs. Attenwell is not that happy that her husband is on the trip because political life often entails long absences from home. "We're up in Ottawa 36 to 48 weeks a year for four days a week, and my spouse is in Toronto or Vancouver or wherever," explains Attenwell. "This is an opportunity to be together and here it's with what you're trying to do there." And at accounts, the word overseas schedules are demanding. Waterloo-area Conservative MP Harry Brightwell took a week-long sponsored trip to Taiwan in 1996 with two House of Commons colleagues and says that this 12-hour daily routine included visits to steel plants, airports, the Taiwanese parliament, Buddhist temples and the international trade centre. "There was very little opportunity to play, as in going out to a good meal or show," says Brightwell.

Even so, critics say that it is wrong for MPs to accept free plane tickets, valued at \$4,000 per person, and hotel accommodation worth up to \$700 a day. "The reason why we do this is to assist for the interests of their country and to go some place where they would never have the money themselves to go," says the MP's Association. "I think it's a pernicious way for foreign governments to gain influence at the expense of the democratic process." He says that guests should be invited to the trips if it is important for parliamentarians to observe foreign travel, it should be paid for by the Canadian government.

In fact, chairman Attenwell's role as controversial areas among MPs who have gone on "business" trips that Attenwell frequently has the final say over who goes on the excursions because the Taiwanese traditionally defer to the person they have accepted as their chief contact on Parliament Hill. In-

stead, when contacted by Marlow's *Chung* referred all specific queries about the trip program to Attenwell. And on one occasion, Attenwell said his power to effectively block parliamentarians from taking the tour. Rock says that he organized a party to Taiwan last November for Senate Speaker Guy Carleton and three Conservative MPs, but Attenwell vetoed the trip. Attenwell, for his part, said that he told the group that they were free to visit Taiwan on their own, but not as part of his excursion. Attenwell added that the only opposition he has made on behalf of Bowen was to press Canadian officials to create a multi-entry visa so that Taiwanese visitors can travel freely between the United States and Canada.



Taipei's Grand Hyatt hotel: there was little opportunity to play

Before the program was introduced, he says, Taiwanese businessmen who were traveling in the United States met with uncertainty and tape when attempting on short notice to enter Canada. Said Attenwell: "I remember when I first heard about the program a few years ago, thinking, 'We'll shut ourselves in a good thing to do. Why wouldn't we try and help on this? I don't call that lobbying for some special interest group.'"

Attenwell also insists that he has not heard of any MP lobbying the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Taiwan's behalf. But External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall says that several MPs have contacted her to ask that Canada extend diplomatic recognition to Taiwan. "I don't know if the MPs who took these trips are the ones who

lobbed me," McDougall told Attenwell. "I could look at it, I suppose, but I don't worry me." The minister says that she herself was offered a Taiwan passport the day after being elected to Parliament in 1984, but turned the offer down. "I'm very careful about accepting freebies," said McDougall. "There is a question of influence." But unlike McDougall, McDougall says that she does not see any need to extend passports paid for by foreign governments. "In the case of Taiwan, the issue of diplomatic recognition is well-known," said the minister. "If the issue were something little and off-the-wall—that would worry me."

In the absence of diplomatic ties between Canada and Taiwan, Rock says that the parliamentary delegations are filling a vacuum by maintaining relations on Canada's behalf with a country that conducts \$3.2 billion a year in trade with Canada. Taiwan is Canada's eighth largest supplier, and shares its largest purchaser of goods and services. The MPs, for their part, say that visits to Taiwan by high-level Canadian officials make it easier for Canadian companies to do business in the country. In that respect, Attenwell says that a one-day stopover in Taipei by Trade Minister Michael Wilson on Sept. 2—billed as a private visit to avoid antagonizing mainland China—was a breakthrough. The highlight of Wilson's visit, which was organized by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and by Canadian business interests in Taiwan, was a speech to a blue-ribbon Taipei audience that included the country's former minister. Said Mark Lewis, a Canadian lawyer based in Taipei who helped to organize Wilson's speech: "It will accelerate trade between our two countries."

But the notion that politicians at that edge of the Pacific Rim is dismissed by one organization with strong ties to Taiwan. Dave Rouse, managing director of the Vancouver-based of Trade, says that his 4,000-member organization runs its own trade mission to Taiwan. Rouse adds that there are no agendas for members between Canada and Taiwan and that he does not know of any businessman who has ever run into a problem that required political intervention. "It doesn't take politicians to open doors," said Rouse. "Quite frankly, I don't know what the benefits are of having us go over there." Those doubts are clearly shared by many of Canada's globe-trotting politicians.

PAUL KAHILA with JESSIE FENNER at Ottawa

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# Speaking his mind

Ralph Nader turns his attention to Canada

Since his 1985 publication of *Unsafe at Any Speed*, a damning assessment of Ford's *Mustang*, Nader has been a thorn in the side of U.S. corporate and political culture. Now, the Washington-based lawyer has turned his attention to Canada. His latest book, *Canada First*, is a compilation of more than 125 Canadian achievements in science, industry, social policy and other fields. Last month Nader

58, also appeared before a parliamentary committee in Ottawa to testify against the Conservative government's Bill C-50, now before the Senate. That legislation will end Canada's system of compulsory licensing, which allows for the production of cheaper generic drugs up to 11 years before the expiry of a drug company's 20-year patent. An outspoken critic of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney as well as American president-elect Bill Clinton and the North American Free Trade Agreement, Nader recently spoke with Maclean's Assistant Editor Joe Chialini in Toronto. Excerpt:

**Maclean's:** What made you decide to write *Canada First*?

**Nader:** In the United States, we're in a big fight over national health care, and in the past we've been struggling for a variety of improvements. Whenever we can point to Canada as a model to operate on, our case is strengthened. In that sense, the United States has needed Canada over the years. As far as Canada goes, the outcome of a referendum I had in addressing Canadian audiences that they don't know very much about Canadian achievements.

**Maclean's:** Why is that important?

**Nader:** Canada is going through the fires of a crisis, should it be one called "inequality"? The transcontinental railroad has been captured and you've got the agricultural commodities from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, it is hard to see what is keeping the country together. But when you go through the history of Canada, you realize that the resurgence of the country was related to its uniqueness and creativity. So this book is an attempt to start a discussion about what kind of society is

required for a country to continue to innovate from a self-determined base, rather than from an international downward harmonization process as represented by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and other international trade agreements.

**Maclean's:** What Canadian achievements impress you most?



Nader: a dictatorial and contemporary government

**Nader:** The transcontinental railways and equality of the National Film Board—the first documentary on auto safety was done by the NFB. National health insurance. Compulsory drug licensing—world's only such credit union. Adult education. Consumer change. The CRTC—that was my first television interview, after the publication of *Unsafe at Any Speed*. A lot of the country's social legislation. And you cannot minimize Canada's technical achievements. If you think as average scientists of Americans, "Who started the first commercial jet transport?" they would say the United States. Wrong—Canada. Who started the first commercial oil well? Why, it was in Pennsylvania.

**Wrong—Canada.** It is obvious that Canada has been somewhat of a laboratory of social progress that before groups in the United States have learned from.

**Maclean's:** What effect will NAFTA have on Canada?

**Nader:** It is a real threat to the legitimate sovereignty and self-determination of Canada. This compulsory drug licensing law, which is being scrapped—it is being scrapped because 30-year patents are built into NAFTA. The critical sovereignty issue of determining the price of health care is being surrendered to an authority where disputes are settled in a most unamicable way, by successive tribunals, because the North American agreement eventually comes under NAFTA. And just to be clear, none, who is surrendering piece by piece Canadian sovereignty was international order that public structure downward and is controlled by global corporations.

**Maclean's:** What do you think will be the effect of NAFTA on Mexico?

**Nader:** Mass displacement of millions of Mexicans, especially onto farmers, because they cannot compete against the efficiency of U.S. corn producers. That means peasants will lose their cities or land now. And a lot of dirty industry will decide to go to Mexico, because the pollution laws will not be enforced. Here we are moving towards a common market among Canada, the United States and Mexico, even though Mexico has many characteristics of a police state and Mexican citizens

who try to pass laws or get laws enforced are treated in a very rough manner—to put it mildly. This is a country where labor organizations are suppressed or destroyed, where the press is bought and sold, where elections are stolen in some of the results are in, one way or the other, by the ruling party. The entire posture of NAFTA is that the three countries will have equal environmental and other laws, but they are not equally enforced. The laws are phony, in terms of enforcement, in Mexico. The very premise of equality that politicians are pushing to do as a way to sell NAFTA is seriously flawed.

**Maclean's:** Spoken for the industries you take on—most recently Canadian patent-drug companies—have called you a hard guy.

**Nader:** They are not hard guys, if someone's doing it for a charitable purpose.

**Maclean's:** Is that your only response?

**Nader:** No. First of all, I come up here a lot, working with citizens' groups around the country, and I don't get my hands personally for speeches. These are passed back into our programs at the United States. So the companies here in a laugh. Industry in the United States tried to do this years ago—they don't even try now. It is a way that these Canadian corporate interests, who are puppets of U.S. corporations, try to divert attention from the issue.

**Maclean's:** Canadian firms among those who have a reputation for being skeptical for giving much support to Canada for whatever you are doing?

**Nader:** Well, I think there is a lot of support. But in the last decade, Canada you've had democratic elections to produce a dictatorial government, running legislation through the senate procedures. When the history of the Mulroney government is written, the title can be "Prime Minister of Canada, on loss from Washington." These have been a kind of state co-optation of governing the sovereignty of a nation. It is just unacceptable, other than because of a personality failure, that a prime minister would consent only thank his loss of history, evidence and public opinion.

**Maclean's:** What is your assessment of president-elect Clinton?

**Nader:** Clinton is an economic realist. In many ways, his personality is similar to Mulroney's. Up from a relatively poor background, climbed his way to the top and ever since has been saying "Gee whiz, how I grew up!" He looks with powerful corporations and fly on their pins. Go to their mountain homes. That is what Clinton is. He basically conceded issue after issue in Arkansas when the corporations wanted something against the interests of the average people. He has no good instincts. But we're hoping that the White House will change a person. Finding that, we just have to keep mobilizing in our democracy, make it tougher, stronger, so that public servants are servants of the public.

**Maclean's:** You have been asked a reputation for being a bit of a cynic. Do you still have any hope for Canada for whatever you are doing?

**Nader:** No, there. And not on C.D.



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# THE THREATS ABROAD

**DESPITE A FULL DOMESTIC AGENDA, FOREIGN POLICY MAY DOMINATE THE EARLY DECISION-MAKING OF CLINTON'S WHITE HOUSE**

President-elect Bill Clinton won the White House with his promise to repair the economy and other domestic problems. He would, he said, keep his eyes set firmly on the home front. But, with his Jan. 20 inauguration ceremony still in the planning stage, the world's hot spots are forcing a U-turn in Clinton's posture—and foreign policy may now dominate the early decision making of his presidency. From Bosnia Herzegovina to Somalia, from the Middle East to the emerging nations of the former Soviet Union, disasters and crises loom menacingly. Even the world's backbone agency of the business world, a treaty between the United States and Russia—allowing long-range nuclear weapons by two-thirds and identical land-based missiles with multiple warheads—highlighted the challenges Clinton takes office amid the growing danger of nuclear arms falling into the hands of unscrupulous or unstable regimes. In fact, Tonya Cobb, a former national security aide at the Reagan administration, noted that few incoming presidents have faced so many foreign policy dangers. Meanwhile, the national security team that Clinton has assembled to steer him through that minefield is made up of safe, establishment figures who reflect a foreign policy that places America in the hot seat as the world's sole remaining superpower.

Clinton, a former Arkansas governor with no foreign policy experience, has chosen veterans and highly skilled technicians who favor cautious conformity, who can help him deal with Congress and who will advise him on key decisions. A senior Bush administration official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that Clinton transition officials have already told career diplomats that the new foreign-policy team will not revive current U.S. efforts in Somalia, Russia or Bosnia. What they will do is shift the emphasis from seeking rapid progress to such countries as Iraq, Iran and Libya and move towards policies driven by economic concerns. "This is a cabinet where Clinton brings a very firm grip and where people are unlikely to act without direction from the president himself," said Stephen Levin, Clinton's former ambassador to the United States. "It's not a cabinet that will back him over new ground."

Clinton's new foreign policy team will be led by his transition director, Warren Christopher, 67, the longtime and revered secretary of state designate. A lawyer with solid diplomatic experience, his reputation is one of prudence, rather than boldness. As deputy secretary of state in the 1977-to-1981 Carter administration, Christopher, who is known to



Gannon in Sarajevo: the world's hot spots will demand attention

for his role in the 1991 Persian Gulf crisis, opposed assistance for countries with repressive governments, and he is likely to make human rights a major concern, said Helmut Sonnenfeldt, a Brookings Institution scholar and former state department analyst. "The overtones from the Clinton campaign suggests increased activism on Yugoslav, Somali, nuclear nonproliferation and human rights issues, especially with regard to China."



**Warren Christopher**  
The new secretary of state is seen as a cautious manager



**Les Aspin**  
A defense secretary with plans to restructure the military



**Anthony Lake**  
A national security adviser with a liberal world outlook

Langston Christopher (brother and protégé of Anthony Lake, 53, will take over as national security adviser. Lake began his government service 30 years ago as a foreign service officer. He resigned from Kissinger's national security staff in 1970 to pursue the U.S. invasion of Cambodia, but returned to Washington in 1977 as chief of policy planning for

the Carter administration. There are some concerns within the think-tank community in Washington that Christopher and Lake may not understand even their Clinton may suffer from a lack of diversity in the policy options that they present. But that should not be a problem with senior prominent members of the national security team, Les Aspin, 54, the crony chairman of the House armed services committee, who is Clinton's choice for secretary of defense. The Wisconsin Democrat generally supports military intervention overseas and the use of weapons needed to get the job done. But he has firm plans to cut and radically restructure the military to fit the post-Cold War new world order.

As director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Clinton chose R. James Woolsey, 51, a Washington lawyer with extensive experience in national security affairs under both Republican and Democratic presidents. He has close ties to Congress and is expected to move the CIA away from its Cold War obsession with Moscow and towards preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, terrorism, drugs, ethnic hatreds and ecological dangers. Madeleine Albright, 52, the only woman in a top spot on the national security team, will become ambassador to the United Nations, a job Clinton plans to rotate to cabinet level.

The crash of urgent foreign policy issues may make it increasingly difficult for Clinton to get Washington's attention on bilateral problems. "There is no question that the members of Clinton's administration will want to be on the best possible terms with Canada," said Charles Dorn, director of the Center of Canadian Studies at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. "But they have a full agenda, and pressing problems come first."

With the economy as its main focus over the long term, said Dan Rieps, director of the Foreign Policy Research Institute at Philadelphia, Clinton's foreign policy team will concentrate on relations with Japan and Europe. Japan added that the new administration will try to highlight trade and look for policies that link terrorism to the environment, it will have its hands full dealing with crisis and policies that are already well underway.

WILLIAM LUTHER: in Washington

## World Notes

### COLLOR'S BAREWELL

Months after the opening of his Senate impeachment trial, disgraced Brazilian President Fernando Collor vowed to resign. The 63-year-old Collor vowed to fight the impeachment proceedings, which are based on charges that he received millions of dollars from a government influence-peddling scheme. In June, Franco, 62, acting president since Congress suspended Collor in October, was sworn in to succeed him.

### OWING FREE

President George Bush denied allegations that his controversial Christmas Eve pardon of former defense secretary Casper Weinberger and five other officials implicated in the Iran-contra arms-for-bushings scandal gave the appointment that government officials are above the law. James Branshaw, the lead prosecutor in the Weinberger case, called the pardon "a conflict of interest," and a U.S. Gallup poll found that 54 per cent of respondents disapproved of Bush's decision.

### GUNBATT DIPLOMACY

The United States denounced the aircraft carrier *Kitty Hawk* from the coast of Somalia to the Persian Gulf to help enforce a no-fly zone over northern Iraq. The ship followed the shooting down of a Iraqi MiG aircraft by a U.S. F-16 fighter on Dec. 27 in the restricted area created to protect rebellious Shiite Muslims from the Iraqi military.

### A DONT'S DEFIANT

In a vote that strengthened Serbia's hard-line president, Slobodan Milosevic, the Yugoslav parliament denounced Prime Minister Milan Pavic, a vocalized American who had sought to end the civil war. But a Gerson, Milosevic, Croat and Serb leaders from the beleaguered former Yugoslav state of Bosnia met for the first time since fighting began in April.

### A CROWN FOR CANADA

Canada's national junior hockey team clinched the world championship by winning its first six games in an eight-nation tournament in Sweden. The victory gave Canada its third junior title in six years, after last year's worst-ever finish—a fourth place—in Germany.

### RAULD AT THE POLLS

Kerry's three main opposition leaders demanded a new election, accusing the government of President Daniel araujo of vote-rigging to secure its victory at the country's first multiparty elections in 36 years.

## THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

## Death of a nation

*Czechs and Slovaks break up their country*

After the "velvet revolution"—the "velvet divorce" of the Czech and Slovak republics in 1993—the two peoples parted in a show that the media called the "Velvet Revolution." The Czech Republic's Communist regime shared with the Slovaks the same brutal history of the 1930s and 1940s. In November, 1989, the crowds that stormed Prague's subterranean Wenceslas Square revealed in Czechoslovakia's newly won freedom and optimism looked to a prosperous future. Three years and a series of political and economic crises later, the road in Bratislava, capital of the newly independent Slovak Republic, was far more in keeping with last week's icy winter weather: streets, and with more than a hint of dread, for what lies ahead. "This is a leap in the dark," said television producer Leo Ruzicki, describing the severing of the Czech Republic and Slovakia that became official on Jan. 1. "Neither the government nor the people are prepared and the implications have not really sunk in yet. It is a colossal gamble."

Proceeding was a constant tension at last week's term of the 74-year-old Czechoslovak Republic. The separation is unlikely to provoke the sort of widespread riot that followed the dismantling of Yugoslavia, although in one isolated case of violence an explosion damaged an empty parking lot on the new border on Jan. 3. But beneath the usually docile, calm-faced facade of the breakers, there are darker forces at work. Many of them are personified by Vladimir Meciar, the Slovak Republic's first prime minister—a brawling, populist leader who has risen to power by pandering to Slovak nationalism and by making rape promises to reverse the country's heavy industries, especially weapon production, in order to survive. Meciar, 47, has a reputation for having raised slaves among Slovakia's 600,000 ethnic Hungarians, who are uneasy over his reluctance to their demands for language and education rights under a new constitution. Declared Meciar: "If Hungarians want better relations, they should learn to get along with Slovaks." Many Slovaks regard such statements as a sign that, if the prime minister's economic prescriptions fail, his government may turn sharply nationalist.

But Meciar, a boxer in his youth who often wears a baseball-capped style, still enjoys receiving support among Slovaks. Modern, former Communist officials and other Slovaks, in particular, respond sympathetically to his claim that the country was treated like a colony in the former republic, where foreign investment funds flowed into the more urban Czech

sector by a ratio of 10:1. "Slovaks have a deep inferiority complex and they are slighted everywhere," said Tomas Huska, another Bratislava TV producer. "Meciar cleverly tapped into their need for an identity and security, and now they have a strong, aggressive leader who



Slovak army soldiers carry their new nation's flag: 'This is a leap in the dark'

understands their need for recognition."

Meciar was popular enough to orchestrate the defeat in July of Václav Havel, the playwright who was Czechoslovakia's first post-Communist president. Havel's ability to see re-election was largely caused by the disaffected Slovak majority in the Czechoslovak parliament, leading to the secession that resulted in the division of the federation into two republics. Many analysts say that Meciar initially invoked the prospect of independence in order to gain more advantages within the federation for the 3.3 million Slovaks (outnumbered by 16.5 million Czechs). But after Havel resigned rather than preside over the country's dissolution, Meciar had to deal with the more intransigent Czechoslovak prime minister, Václav Klaus, who was unwilling to accommodate Slovak demands and almost immediately began to negotiate terms of the divorce.

The widespread belief in Slovakia that the Czechs were eager to cast them aside has increased tensions across the new border. Slurs against Czechs are common on Bratislava's streets, where there are warnings that the

authorities in Prague are directing an anti-Slovak conspiracy. Actor Andrej Hryc, a friend of Meciar, suggested in an interview with *Washington Post* that an international Jewish capitalist network, manipulated by Prague, was blocking foreign investment into Slovakia. In that climate, Meciar's views have "touched a deep chord here," said Hryc.

But even Hryc said that his friend's political style is rough. "Meciar is authoritarian and egomaniacal—a bit like a tank," he added. Such characteristics directly worry those Slovaks who foster the nationalist explosion quickly giving way to economic carbohem. Meciar has bowed much of his recovery gains on slowing the pace of market reforms by returning to more state control. He fears undermining Slovakia's large armaments industry, which

employs about 100,000 workers. But Slovakia's traditional customers for weapons—the former republics of the Soviet Union and other former East Bloc countries—are not in the market for new weapons. Meanwhile, Meciar's proposals have led some Slovaks to shift their money out of the country in anticipation of a devaluation of the Slovak crown.

The only thing that Czechs and Slovaks appear to agree on is that a majority in both new republics did not want independence as the first place, a constant supported by various public-opinion polls. Taking an optimistic view, *Washington Post* editor Martin Durand said: "At least we will now be able to determine our own future after years of domination." But Jan Zvara, 54, a Czech research biologist who has lived in Bratislava for 36 years, said he is as longer feels at home in the city. Calling Czechoslovakia's breakup "a failure of the politicians and a tragedy," Zvara said that he has already made plans to move to Prague.

BRUCE WALLACE with SUSAN MORGAN in Bratislava

## SOMALIA

## African relief

*Canadians join a global rescue operation*

On the other hand, past Somalia troops—just planes, trained down onto the ground—of Bel Hani, stirring up suffering clouds of fire yellow dust. From behind the bird-wire fence on the airport perimeter, hundreds of Somalis looked on as the planes dropped their cargo. Canadian soldiers loaded down with supplies and weapons. Last week, the full Canadian contingent of 445 soldiers, the bulk of them from the Peterborough, Ont.-based Canadian Airborne Regiment, arrived in the isolated Somali corridor to 200 km west of the capital Mogadishu. There, under the scorching African sun, the soldiers dug trenches, set up tents and hoisted the Canadian flag in a patch of field of thorn bushes. "I've got 15 years in the military and this is the first time I'm doing what I've been trained to do," said Master Cpl Michael Reine, 36, of Moncton, N.B. "And it's in a peaceful way, which is the way I would rather have it."

Bel Hani was the last of eight major staging centres to be occupied in the U.S.-led military campaign to secure the delivery of aid to Somalia, a country ravaged by drought, famine and two years of bitter civil war. The next step will be to expand the operation into the countryside, where armed gangs are still looting and sapping. The Canadians, along with 45 U.S. army special forces personnel assigned to Bel Hani, will be responsible for securing a 20,000-square-mile territory—roughly the size of Nova Scotia—near the Ethiopian border. The troops quickly established hot points through the city, escorted food convoys and set up night-vision checkpoints. "The people who have power now are those that control the guns," said Lt.-Col. Carol Matthews, of St. John's, Que., commander of the troops in Bel Hani. "We are not here to win a war, but to help the people to survive."

Matthews began meeting with local elders to consider how the Somalis can establish their own security force, but he acknowledged that the Canadians will first have to create a secure environment on the region. Just how long that could take was evident last week in Mogadishu, where troops of the United States and its allies have maintained a strong presence since the famine began on Dec. 9. Even so, 12 people died in the capital on New Year's Day, 36-year-old Mohamed Abdullahi Gadoh, died. President George Bush was making a two-day visit to Somalia. He praised the troops and told them that, while his mission to secure food supplies to starving Somalis in the war-ravaged anti-famine country would not be long-term,

he still did not know when the 18,000-member force would return home. Said Bush: "I wish I knew the answer, but I don't know just suspended circumstances."

By Somali standards, Bel Hani, which escaped the worst of the fighting during the



A soldier arrives in Bel Hani: 'I wonder what will happen when we leave'

civil war, is relatively calm. The International Committee of the Red Cross has been able to deliver food to the city since last March, although supplies were often looted by gunmen—the so-called "blackshirts"—driving heavily armed bulldozers. But most of them left Bel Hani when the Canadian forces arrived. Last week, the Canadians issued part of their anti-attack rules.

But U.S. special forces troops patrolling about 15 km west of Bel Hani also captured a Chinese-made anti-aircraft gun mounted on the back of a Fiat truck. The reaction of its driver, 36-year-old Mohamed Abdullahi Gadoh, died. The difficulties involved in protecting order to Somalia. In an interview, conducted through a U.S. army interpreter, Gadoh claimed to be a member of a militia responsible for protecting his village near Bel Hani. "I

was very happy the Canadians came. We were praying for something like that, but I changed my mind," said Gadoh, after being grilled by U.S. and Canadian officials. He said that the soldiers should not wear weapons that the Somalis used to protect themselves. "If they take the weapons from the people," he said, "the Canadians will have to defend us."

As the newly arrived Canadians adjusted to daytime temperatures as high as 40° C, medical officers treated minor cases of heatstroke. They also shipped one soldier with a suspected case of malaria to the Canadian Forces supply ship *HMCS Preserver*, stationed off Mogadishu, and sent two for scorpion stings. But most of the troops were at their post as they celebrated the New Year with low-key celebrations. Like-  
wise Canadian beer, down in from the Pa-

series, was available at 75 cents a can, same as two per person.

At a makeshift table near the camp gate, soldiers savored their beers and ate army ration as they chatted about what their work might be doing on New Year's Eve, about prospects they heard in the night, about the Somali children who asked them to the camp to manage through the holidays for food. "If we just feed these people bags of rice for a few months, and then their food supply is cut off again, it'll be even worse than before," said Master Cpl James Jencks, 30, of Kingston, Que. "I wonder what will happen when we leave."

MARY SENECH in Bel Hani

# CHARITY AT WORK

**CORPORATE DONORS NOW DEMAND THAT THE BENEFICIARIES BE MORE EFFICIENT AND RELEVANT**

Students working on projects at the St. Rose Macellari School, an institution for blind and visually impaired elementary and high school students in Brampton, Ont., have frequently been frustrated by a lack of resource materials. Under their updated counterparts, who can go to their school library for up-to-date information on a wide variety of topics, the students at the school in southwestern Ontario have often had to wait months for recent publications to be read into tape or translated into braille. But the situation improved dramatically in 1990 when Hewlett-Packard (Canada) Ltd. began annual donations of computer equipment. Now, nearly 70 students from grades 7 to 12 can use a high-speed scanner on any page. After the machine has scanned the literature into its data base, the students can then choose one of three options. Those who can read braille can use an attached braille printer. Those who cannot read the raised dots can listen to a computer-synthesized voice read out the material, while those who have some sight may elect to read extra-large print on a computer screen. Lynn Martin, a computer teacher at the school, said that the donated equipment has greatly enhanced the caliber of the students' work. She added, "Students focus on their abilities and not their disabilities."

Toronto-based Hewlett-Packard is typical of a growing number of corporate donors, as the recession continues to hurt their profitability, companies are looking for ways to contribute to charity while furthering their corporate objectives. According to Sandra Pugh, Hewlett-Packard's grant and donations coordinator in Toronto, about 50 per cent of the nearly \$1.85 million that the Canadian subsidiary of the California-based computer giant contributed to nonprofit organizations across Canada in 1992 was in equipment. The rest was in cash. The



Martin: 'Students focus on their abilities, and not their disabilities'

figures, however, are calculated on the retail price of the equipment donated and Pugh declined to reveal the actual cost to the company. Corporations in Canada may claim income tax deductions for the fair market value of the equipment that they contribute to nonprofit organizations. However, most executives say this because of the complexity involved in

claiming the deductions, they do not bother to do so. While it is difficult to estimate how much in goods companies donate to charity each year, their reasons for doing so are clear as the lingering recession eats into their cash flow, they give what they can as ways that involve as actual cash outlay of less than before.

At the same time, corporations are also

setting forth more exacting criteria for their recipients. More and more, companies are demanding that their beneficiaries be efficient, effective and relevant. Said David Gore, director of the corporate unit at Toronto-based Insignia, a nationwide campaign to improve Canadian charitable performance: "Corporations are looking for evidence of results, not just a nice message."

Corporations began to scrutinize nonprofit groups and how they use their funding about five years ago. Since then, that trend has

led to grants and subsidies to various government-supported programs. Although Ontario has not set standards which specific organizations will be affected, Insignia estimates that the total amount is \$1.4 billion by 1995.

The withdrawal of government support means that individuals, foundations and companies, which together gave about \$5.6 billion in 1982, would have to contribute at least one-third more in the near future. Many businesses, which allocate their tax-deductible donations principally from pretax profits, may be in

no position to increase their contributions. According to the Ottawa-based Institute of Donations and Public Affairs Research, one-third of 75 surveys conducted in October indicated that their donation budgets will drop significantly in 1993.

George Khoury, director of the institute, which is a division of the Conference Board of Canada, said that, overall, this year's donations will be down by \$1.5 per cent to \$100.8 million, from \$102.6 million in 1992.

Among the participants in the 1992 survey were financial, retail and gas sectors indicated that it is planning to curtail donations the most severely. Calgary-based Petro-Canada, for one, set its 1992 corporate donations budget at \$2 million. That is down from the \$2.5 million the company donated in 1991—which Petro-Canada reduced during the year from a planned figure of \$3 million. According to Petro-Canada spokesman Jeremy Webb, the company also looks for some publicity in return. Said Webb: "These days there has to be some synergy between donor and charitable organizations. We need to ask, 'What is in it for Petro-Canada?'"

Not some experts say that the squeeze is not entirely bleak—despite a 30-per-cent drop in Canadian corporate profits. Said Martin Chiswick, chairman of Insignia and of Toronto-based Cogswell Exploration Co. Ltd., "A 5.5-per-cent drop in charitable donations is not bad in comparison." Chiswick added that donations have been rising as a percentage of pretax profits, to 1.24 per cent in 1990, up from 0.99 per cent in 1989. Khoury agreed in his survey that even among those companies that indicated they would decrease their 1993 budgets for charity, the majority said that they planned to sustain their contributions to the extent and to increase their protection groups. "The environment is not a huge percentage of their budgets, but it is the fastest-growing," Khoury said. "As for the United Way, it is viewed as the last thing they

## Business Notes

### FADED GLITTER

Endangered Peoples Jewellery Ltd., Canada's largest chain of jewelry stores, filed for legal bankruptcy protection from its creditors. Irving Gertson, chairman of the 75-year-old, Toronto-based chain, which operates 100 stores across Canada under the Peoples, Muggins and Mackenzie names, and that it is too early to predict how many stores will close under its court-approved reorganization plan.

### A TRADE RETREAT

A senior Canadian trade official, who requested anonymity, said that Brian Mulroney's government has given private assurances to Washington that it will amend Canadian trade laws to make it easier for U.S. firms to appeal rulings by Canadian trade authorities to a binational dispute-resolution panel under the Free Trade Agreement. Now, a panel can only overturn a ruling by Ottawa's Canadian International Trade Tribunal on such issues as dumping of imports at the panel. Such the ruling to be "patently unreasonable."

### AN ESTATE BONANZA

U.S. compensation experts estimated that the heirs of Tim Warner Inc. chairman Steven Bins, who died of prostate cancer last month, could receive payments of \$370 million or more from the company over the next decade, much of it under complex stock-option arrangements in Bins's 1989 contract with the company.

### CLOSER TO THE EDGE

Two small New York City investment firms, which own about \$10 million worth of bonds issued by a U.S. subsidiary of Olympic & York Developments Ltd., filed a lawsuit that could force all of OYD's U.S. operations into bankruptcy. So far, OYD has managed to avoid filing for legal bankruptcy protection in the United States, as has its Canada and the United Kingdom, by consulting regularly with its creditors.

### STILL IN THE RUNNING

Moses Zuckerman, the heartbeat president of Toronto's CITY TV, and that he will press on with him to add a licence for a 24-hour national "newsweek" station in Ottawa after the country's top broadcast regulator said that he would award new applications for the licence. George Russell, chairman of Britain's Independent Television Commission, which rejected a bid from a group led by Zuckerman last month, said that to be successful, my applicant would need more solid financing.

will stop going to it is the one way of giving to most areas under our umbrella."

According to Reisman, Canada has more money than 60 other major developed countries in Canada to which corporations and individuals may make tax-deductible donations. The majority of these are religious or political groups, which corporations usually avoid in a bid to remain nonpartisan. But that still leaves a bewildering array of profit groups for corporate donors to consider. Lisa Elliott, manager of corporate communications for Mississauga, Ontario-based Federal Express Canada Ltd., said that the recipient mix averages of 38-to-40 percent each week from fund raises, usually only 10 of them from major, nationally recognized charities.

Unlike many other corporations, Federal Express has no preset budget for charitable donations. But even though the company makes its decisions on a more informal basis, Elliott said, requests and will meet stringent requirements. "We look for not-for-profit organizations that are relevant to our business and our employees," she noted. Since most Federal Express workers are in their early 30s and have young families, the company focuses on funding groups that help children, according to Elliott. She added that, whenever possible, Federal Express tends to donate goods and services rather than cash. As a result, the courier company has taken initiatives that have included providing free vans for six weeks starting last August for a cross-Canada road show in part aimed at increasing awareness of Child Find, a national network to help locate missing children.

Other corporations are also concentrating on non-profit organizations that share a similar target market. Toronto-based Timberlands Canada Inc., which markets personal hygiene products for women, introduced a national campaign in October to raise money for about 400 women's crisis shelters across Canada. Timberlands had contributed \$300,000 over three years to establish the Timpus Trust Fund, in partnership with the Canadian Women's Foundation in Toronto, to administer the grants. Timberlands also supports the campaign with affiliation included in its packages. Barbara Merino-Sanchez, Timberlands marketing manager, said that, as a result, the public has already donated \$22,000 in the case. She added: "We have a

specifically female product, so our consumers have a vested interest in this problem." Companies are also becoming more aware that charities actually help those they claim to be helping—and that they open their books to prove it. Said the donations committee's Kinsley: "Nothing turns a corporation off faster than finding out a charity has hired a consultant who takes 40 per cent of the funds raised." Kinsley says that such incidents can involve large fundraising efforts as well as small ones, but most

the fact that every penny raised goes to Fide House, said King. "They are level of giving thousands of dollars to a charity, and then learning that the chairman was given a silver box-lease."

All the same time, many companies are starting to seek more employee input into their corporate donations programs. The Milton Cos. Ltd. is typical of how some companies are evolving. Patricia Morris-Bell, director of corporate affairs, said that the Toronto-based company has a 200-year history of giving to charities. Now, she said, that to ensure that the company considers as many interests as possible, 32 rank-and-file employees and executives serve on nine charity committees. She added that Milton will introduce a matching-gift program this year, in which the company will match any employee's charitable donation, up to \$2,000 a year. Said Morris-Bell: "It's like being partners with our men employees. It has received a very positive reaction."

Despite the progress made in many corporate donations programs, some executives say that business can, and should, still do more. Margaret Francis, president of cosmetics retailer The Body Shop Canada, said that business has to change the way it helps. "It is too easy to lose your sense of obligation by looking at your bottom line and deciding what you can charge you can meet," she said. Instead, Francis said, activities benefiting charities need to become an integral part of a company's annual business plan. For their part, the 164 Body Shop stores across Canada, which change their windows about every three weeks, donate new window displays each year to fund and awareness-raising campaigns. Each store is also required to allocate 16 hours a month so that its employees can work for community projects during store hours and at their regular level of pay. Francis and the company also donate to charities as well. "Our activities give companies some meaning," she added. "Without capitalism, there would be hunger." As corporate donors try to raise some of the eye in Canada's social-safety net, they are learning that there is more to running a business than the bottom line.

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Barbara Wickens with Jody Hoopes in Calgary

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Canada's donations are rising as a percentage of pretax profits

computers have clean records. In 1990, Toronto-based Peter King organized a company-wide rally for Fide House Foundation Inc., which provides housing for about 400. That first year, he raised \$6,000 selling \$35 raffle tickets after he persuaded 16 local businesses to donate such prizes as a ticket to a horse show. This year, the raffle raised \$25,000 for Fide House, and King said that companies now approach him to see whether they can contribute raffle prizes. He attributed the company's ability to attract corporate donors to

proposals during store hours and at their regular level of pay. Francis and the company also donate to charities as well. "Our activities give companies some meaning," she added. "Without capitalism, there would be hunger." As corporate donors try to raise some of the eye in Canada's social-safety net, they are learning that there is more to running a business than the bottom line.

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# A new flight plan

Canadian's creditors must agree to American's deal

Despite all the negotiating that they have done over the past year, Robert Canadian and Ryan Air exchanged relatively few words last week. Instead, the first terms of a controversial deal between American Airlines Ltd. of Fort Worth, Texas, and Canadian Airlines International Ltd. of Calgary fell to teams of lawyers—and their (in in-

spector) Linda Thomas said that their initial response to the airline's complex financial restructuring plan has been "favorable and encouraging," there is still considerable ground to cover at further meetings planned for January and February. As a result, the company is counting on the vote of confidence from Americans to help win exhibitor support for a proposed

corporate-based investment banker, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "The banks are still helping and pointing fingers at each other over the collapse of cash. It is going to be a delicate job to convince all that structure and get them together." Another obstacle to team spirit among international creditors is that they have different reporting requirements, as well as their own shareholders to appease.

Canadian is reportedly vulnerable to such potential creditor disputes because it has elected to restructure without the benefit of court protection under the federal Companies Creditors Arrangement Act (CCAA). As a result, a secured creditor who is dissatisfied with the company's restructuring plans could easily handily push a state bankruptcy by seized assets. According to Thomas, Canadian avoided CCAA protection in order to gain a greater degree of flexibility for both companies, and airline management "wanted to work with creditors to build a consensus."

Although Canadian's executives will closely monitor the mood of secured and unsecured creditors during the next several months, they also have to deal with American's other conditions in ways that inspire creditor confidence. Early this month, Canadian employees in net income are expected to endorse a 36-per-cent wage cut and a three-year wage freeze—despite the fact that 13,300 jobs will be lost if the American investment in Canadian Airlines' management has already relinquished to accept a 36-per-cent salary reduction. According to Bennett, that corporate solidarity would be critical in closing goodwill from creditors by showing them that they are not the only ones making concessions.

For similar reasons, Canadian filed an application last week for approval of the agreement with the National Air Transport Union, which has 120 days to rule on it. Meanwhile, early February, the Competition Tribunal is expected to accept a hearing into Canadian's controversial attempt to withdraw from its computer reservation contract with Gemini Group International Distribution Systems Inc. Canadian is arguing that it will save money by switching from Gemini to American's Sabre network. And despite the fact that Canadian is already operating on a cashless federal-provincial bailout of \$120 million, it is expected to have less than \$25 million in cash left by February. "I think the shareholders and creditors in their response to the proposed deal, Canadian's struggle to survive has become a sure sign of time."

DEBORAH HENKIN



American Airlines jets in Toronto: significant conditions to a capital infusion

others—other than the companies' respective chief executive officers. At the end of the day, American agreed to invest \$245 million in financially troubled Canadian in exchange for 20 per cent of its voting stock, two seats on the eight-member board of directors and a 20-year computer reservation-services contract. Although American saw its previous demand to name the chief executive for Canadian, it did attach four significant conditions to its capital infusion. In addition to working with creditors to restructure its \$2.5-billion corporate debt, Canadian will have to estimate itself from a contract with its current computer reservation service. Airline employees must also accept an average wage reduction of 30 per cent, while regulations in Ottawa decide whether a foreign aircraft serves the best interests of domestic consumers.

Of all the conditions that Canadian has agreed to meet by Dec. 31, 1990, the toughest one, according to experts, will be the reorganization of its creditors. Although Canadian

that, among other things, calls for the suspension of all debt repayment until late 1993, as well as the conversion of \$600 million of debt into equity.

Vietnam Toronto attorney lawyer Frank Bennett of Bennett, Wacht and Goss, who worked on behalf of the Restructuring firm to restructure Olympia & York Development Ltd. (OYD), says that creditors generally are still in "full shock" and are reluctant to accept the difficult value of their corporate loans in the current economic climate. As well, he added, creditors had to pursue their own agendas exclusively and are frequently reluctant to work together for a common goal. "It takes time for the shock and anger to dissipate in every bankruptcy," said Bennett. "There is always loss during that process."

Analysts say that the dramatic collapse of 1989 in 1992 may have had a positive effect in collecting creditors' overall, but the dispute over the developer's assets has also created serious rifts in the financial community. Some Van-

## BUSINESS WATCH



# Keeping the frontier alive

BY PETER C. NEWMAN

Give a man thought this past January in Canada's northern frontier, specifically to Fort McMurray—the place that was supposed to safeguard the country's energy future. That isolated Alberta settlement perched on the edge of the Canadian Shield now makes sense as a place that is going to have a future.

Yet two decades ago, Fort McMurray's population was expanding at 30 per cent a year, an underground war sands held the promise of making this country self-sufficient in oil. Unlike most frontier communities built up in a hurry to exploit a natural resource, it did not slide into permanent loss. As discovered on a recent visit, Fort McMurray is exactly what it hoped it would become: no boomtown, but a permanent northern settlement with a steady employment base and a quality of life that is only 100 km from Edmonton. A pleasant place, 455 km northwest of Edmonton, it is a well-served community with a highly developed sense of pride and a healthy future outlook. "The boom is over," I was told by Cally Gault, corporate director of the local venture industries council, "but what we're seeing now is a slow, steady growth. In terms of health care, social services, education, outdoor sports and cultural facilities, we've got to be better."

Fort McMurray hasn't escaped the recession. In two last years alone, which have on their payroll just about everybody who isn't working for governments, schools or the municipality, are each laying off workers and undergoing massive restructuring. Senior vice president, which posted a \$275 million loss last week a \$238-million writedown on revenues of \$1.1 billion for the first nine months of 1992, is letting 400 of the 2,400 people go. Synovate Canada Ltd. has just announced a planned \$6 billion expansion, and the much-battered \$30-billion CIBC bank is seeking a \$1 billion bailout. The Golden Square of Canada first began to build a billion barrels of oil—some that the province of the Middle East. So far, only a billion barrels have been extracted.

**Fort McMurray has a cemetery, but its 33-year-old mayor doesn't know where it is—because the average age in town is 26**

staying in Fort McMurray for at least another 30 years. Bennett says they now supply 35 per cent of Canada's oil and expect to jump. Perhaps, in northwestern Alberta, as Canada's most productive oil field by 1996. Both plans, but especially Seneca, are putting cost structures down to the point where they will soon be able to compete with more conventional petroleum sources. With one credit of reserves declining and low oil prices preventing much new exploration, the Alberta oil sands are expected to come into their own.

The sands of oil will be used at great speed, quarried from the sand and clay and put through a highly complicated—and expensive—processing procedure. Total reserves have never been accurately measured, but an Alberta claim that at least 300 billion barrels of extractable synthetic crude lie beneath Fort McMurray and its surrounding counties. Together with other known deposits at Peace River, Cold Lake, Wabasca and the Athabasca region, the Alberta oil sands are thought to hold a billion barrels of oil—more than the known reserves of the Middle East. So far, only a billion barrels have been extracted.

The Golden Square of Canada first began to build the six sands in the 1870s, although the

explorer Peter Phil had found several gravity anomalies in the ground of a substance that the Indians used to repair their backhacks cases, as early as 1878. But it wasn't until the 1930s that some of the necessary extraction technology became available, and another 40 years before the Sun Oil Company opened its first oil sands plant at Fort McMurray. Television didn't come to town until 1970 and as late as 1971 the town's population was only 6,700.

Since then, over 68 per cent by the Petro-Canada based Sun Company Inc. and 34 per cent by the Ontario Energy Corporation, owners of 65,000 barrels of oil per day and has also launched a \$370-million modernization program. Under the leadership of executive vice-president Edythe (Dor) Parkinson, a spunky 46-year-old explorer who spent 20 years in the Oil Patch, the company has become determined to share its processing costs. At the current cost level of \$39 a barrel, the plant was heading straight for extinction. By dividing its expensive bucket wheel excavators and substituting the most up-to-date truck and auger-dredging system, and by managing its distribution, the company hopes to save \$7 per barrel in extraction costs by 1995. "For the first time in the history of this plant," Parkinson told me, "we'll become competitive with the price of crude oil." She added: "That means we can afford the future and open new areas. That's why we're moving west and west, and a couple of new leases and build the community. The oil industry has ended—that we would be here for at least another 30 years."

Synovate, which is owned by eight Canadian-owned oil companies and produces a daily 200,000 barrels, is a similar story of modernization made. It is downsizing its current 4,300-person payroll mainly through attrition.

Fort McMurray's most serious problems are its total dependence on being a company town, it also has the highest unemployment rate in the province, and despite some attractive new local shopping facilities, merchants are having trouble locating retail dollars from travelling down Highway 63 to Edmonton. The town's main advantages are that as two employees are staying put, that they pay higher than average wages, and the recently doubled oil price. "I arrived in Fort McMurray 17 years ago," I was told by Michael MacKinnon, chairman of the local economic development board, "and now I'm being called part of the Old Guard—it's the first time I've been here for 17 years." MacKinnon is 58, Guy Beaudet, a 38-year-old businessman and a 38-year-old businessman at the local Kynogee College and recently elected mayor, told me that he was born in Fort McMurray had a cemetery, but he didn't know where it was, because it was so old and new. Average age in town is 26, a quarter of that McMurray's residents are under 18.

What drives the mayor most dramatically about Fort McMurray is that its citizens are so proud of their community. Life may be far less perfect and the small oil processing facilities hang over the community like a shadow. At least, as far as the town's origin of its prosperity, the Canadian dream is still alive.

# WHAT'S WRONG AT SCHOOL?

**PARENTS, EDUCATORS AND  
POLICY-MAKERS ARE DETERMINED  
TO IMPROVE THE STANDARD  
OF PUBLIC EDUCATION**

**WHAT'S  
WRONG  
AT  
SCHOOL?**

When her nine-year-old son, James, kept coming home from school with headaches, Ann Gay got angry. The computer design artist, who lives in Winnipeg's north end, said that eventually she attributed the headaches to crowding in her son's classroom. But that was not her only concern about James's school. On one occasion, during a parent-teacher interview, she asked why he was having trouble with multiplication. She was told not to worry, that James was progressing at his own rate. But Gay did worry. By late August, Gay had become so disillusioned that she pulled her two sons out of public school. Now James and Andrew, 14, both attend the private Faith Academy Baptist School in Winnipeg. Said Gay: "We have children who are functioning at the high-school level because they did not get a basic education in elementary school."

Ann Gay is not an isolated rebel. Across Canada, thousands of alienated parents have declared war on provincial public education systems which, they maintain, are doing a poor job of teaching their children. Many parents are concerned that their children are not learning to read well (page 42). Some are organizing themselves into lobby groups and demanding that provincial governments reform their education systems (page 26). Other parents, disenchanted with change, have put their children in private schools, where fees can reach \$20,000 a year and more. A growing number of politicians share this concern. Said Derrick Kenfield, chairman of the Nova Scotia legislature's select committee on education: "Teachers feel powerless, parents are frustrated and students are failing to learn."

Provincial authorities as well as contracting the failures of the school systems. During the past five years, all 10 provinces and the two territories have appointed committees or commissions to review how well they teach elementary and high-school students. While the findings conflict in several areas, they are virtually unanimous in one persuasive conclusion: too many students are either drifting through schools that fail to teach them to read or write well, as they are dropping out of high school. The result has been a rising level of frustration on all sides with almost every aspect of pre-university education. Many students are becoming disillusioned. Said George Curran, a Grade 12 student and co-president of the Hambleton, Sask., Collegiate Institute student council: "I know a lot of students who have trouble reading and writing."

Oddly, much of the discontent centres on one of the innovations that many educators hail as a breakthrough—the now widely followed theory of child-centred education, a system that encourages students to progress at their own rate. Critics contend that because the child-centred system does not impose clear standards, it has become unmanageable and is producing near-failure. Christine Bandy, for one, a mother of two grade school children, from Queensville, Ont., placed her son in private school in September, 1991, because they were not learning to read.

*A classroom in Oakville, Ont.: students are failing to learn*



Then, last February, she formed Parents In Action, a parents' lobbying group, which has attracted 600 members. Said Bandy: "We are producing happy children from our schools. It amounts to educational child abuse."

Echoing the parents' frustration, Canadian business associations are among the sharpest critics of the Canadian educational system, with many demanding that reading, writing and computing skills be given higher priority. George Gable, chief executive officer of Hewlett-Packard (Canada) Ltd. of Toronto, says that if Canadian schools do not address the problem, graduates will be unable to compete in high-technology industries. Added Gable, who is director at the Maytree-based Corporate Higher Education Forum, an advisory group advocating a return to basics in education: "We have a lot of university students, and we have had difficulty getting the right people—people who can express themselves in writing."

Still, many school administrators and educators across Canada defend current teaching practices. Richard Dadds, past president of the Toronto-based Canadian Education Association, whose members include teachers, government administrators and other groups with an interest in education, says that much of the criticism is fuelled by a misunderstanding of what the school system is attempting to do. Dadds said that critics often focus selectively on international tests that show Canadian students performing poorly. He said that they often ignore the fact that Canada's top students compete favourably with the best in the world in those same tests. But he added that the school system is increasingly being called on to teach everything from sex education and child-sensitiveness to safe driving practices. Said Dadds: "I think the school system is doing a great job, but one of these days we're going to have to sit down and decide what it is we want from our schools."

The question of exactly what Canadians want from their schools is at the core of a deep philosophical divide. The harshest critics charge that, in failing to give children a solid grounding in reading, writing and arithmetic, schools have become mere day-care centres where students play at learning. Those accusations anger education experts. Patricia Hildren, a teaching consultant at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, B.C., says that the child-centred system prepares children to be more than just good readers and writers. She says that, unlike more traditional approaches where children learn by



# PARENTS WONDER WHY HIGH-SCHOOL GRADUATES CANNOT READ PROPERLY

misinformation, child-centred programs teach children to think and learn independently or co-dependently.

The child-centred approach is still developing in new directions. One remarkable experiment is a program in Lowell, Mass., that schools in 21 other states are copying. It has students participating in a so-called micro-society in which they adopt specific roles from

the world at large. They use money to conduct transactions for businesses, make loans and judge their peers. That kind of approach, say its proponents, trains students to learn through their lives. Said Fred Savage, president of the 30,000-member Alberta Teachers' Association: "Studies show that employers want people who can actually work in teams, and independently. That's what we are producing in our school systems."

Another innovative program, in which students study their own lives as seen in operation in Calgary for more than 10 years, At Bishop Carroll Secondary High School, students do not have regular classes with teachers. Instead, they study on their own in the school library and meet with tutors who help them with any problems that arise. "It was the best preparation for university," said Nola Marston, a physician who graduated from Bishop Carroll in 1965 and currently is an intern at a Kingston, Ont., hospital. "It lets you progress at your own pace."

Still, many teachers say that the demands that society places on the education system make it difficult to concentrate on teaching the basics. Many say that they have had to lower standards because politicians and education bureaucrats must to keep as many children as possible in school. As a consequence, say the teachers, they are having to teach children who have a poor grounding in the basics. Said Frances Watson, who has taught high-school history in Toronto for the past 28 years: "Our standards are not as high as they were 20 years ago."

As well, teachers claim that they often take the blame for the effects of domestic and social problems. Said Irene Venghaus, a high-school sociology teacher in Fredericton: "Society has decided to make the teacher accountable for poor grades, when they are just as likely to be an indicator of tragedy and other home-related problems."

As for the students themselves, it is not hard to find signs that they are becoming over-reliant on the quality of education they are receiving. Indeed, a Maclean's/Dominion poll that surveyed 500 university students in November found that

only 53 per cent felt that high school had prepared them properly for university. Just 30 per cent, said the poll, felt that high school did not attach enough importance to reading and writing. "University could be only worth five extra on a paper," said Dorene. "If you want help, you really have to do it on your own."

So far, the debate over how to improve the education system has been inconclusive. The results of a 1989 Statistics Canada survey concluded that 29 per cent of Canadians between the ages of 16 and 24 lacked the basic skills necessary to read a prospectus. And according to a report last May by the Education Council of Canada, more than one million functionally illiterate young people will emerge from the nation's schools during the next 10 years. Said Paul Duffin, the New Brunswick education minister: "We can't allow this to slide down to just float through the system and not learn to read."

In contrast, defenders of modern education methods point to reductions in national dropout levels. According to Duffin, about 78 per cent of students dropped out of high school in the 1950s. In 1989, the latest year for which figures are available, the national dropout rate was down to 24.3 per cent. But some students themselves say that time is well spent. Said a 17-year-old student in Nelson, B.C.: "A lot of students just aren't motivated and they drop out. I don't think that is the school's fault."

The school system's current approach to dropouts, like many of the modern trends in education, had its origins in the liberal education reforms of the 1960s, which reflected the belief that a child's creativity and self-esteem were as important as learning to read and write. As child-centred education became widespread during the 1970s, it took on more social and psychological overtones. To promote self-confidence and a desire to learn, said Mark Robles, a professor of educational administration at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in Toronto, schools judged students just as heavily on their engagement, attendance and ability to get along with others as on their ability to read and write. And because the theorists considered failure to be damaging to the ego, many teachers encouraged the practice. As a result, he said, child-centred reforms evolved into a system without precise goals. Added Holmes: "You can put a student in Ontario simply by participating in class."

In Room 14 at Winnipeg's Laurier Elementary School many of the education practices now being questioned are in daily use. The room is painted bright yellow, decorated with posters and student projects. Desks are arranged in pairs and the teachers, Stephanie Greene and Julie Matas, a husband-and-wife team who usually work on alternate days, were urging Grade 5 pupils to participate in discussions. Greene and Matas said that, despite the spontaneous conversation and unstructured nature of the classroom, they operate according to a careful plan. "We try to make it interesting without losing sight of the academic goals," said Matas. "The best thing for us is when parents say their children love going to school every day."

To teach reading, Matas uses various methods, supplemented by a word-of-the-day program. The students write down what they think the word means and add it to a list of words they could later use in an essay. Matas said that the approach teaches students about the parts of speech and how to use them in a sentence. If some students have trouble, she

exactly those. Said Matas: "If they understand something they can explain it to other kids better." Matas and Greene also use flashcards to help teach multiplication and assign homework. Said 10-year-old Jacqueline Gertin: "I think homework is good, because when the teachers aren't there, you have to figure out the answer yourself." And if students feel behind, or fail to complete their homework, the teachers telephone their parents. "Most of the parents are grateful," said Matas. "They really want to help out and they are very co-operative."

Lloyd Dennis, one of the leading architects of the reforms that changed the teaching methods now widely used across Canada, says that many of the problems facing education have their origin outside the classroom. Dennis, who lives in Orlia, Ont., was a co-defence lawyer with former Supreme Court justice Kenneth Hall of a groundbreaking 1986 inquiry into education

in Ontario. The so-called Bell-Dennis report advocated the switch from traditional teaching methods to the child-centred system. Dennis, 68, who works part time as a lecturer and writer on education issues, says that he considered much of the mounting criticism of the system unwarranted. Since the Second World War, he said, Canadians have altered their school systems to assume responsibility that has been left to the state. "There have had to be more psychologists and social workers," said Dennis. "They're doing all kinds of things other than teaching reading and writing."

The same view emerged in the results of a \$250,000 study carried out by two education professors at Queen's University in Kingston, Ont., and published in September. Based on interviews with 27,000 teachers across Canada, the survey concluded that emotional problems among students, increasing levels of violence in schools, and the practice in some provinces of judging youngsters with severe behavioural problems at a regular classroom are eroding the quality of education. Said Toronto's Watson: "If you have repeated absences with students, it then to hurt your program." Added fellow Board member, a Grade 7 and 8 mathematics teacher in Fredericton: "You can't really discipline children anymore—and they know it."

Still, the major question asked by parents and employers is why students brought enough knowledge from high school either cannot read or write properly. Said Winnipeg's Gertin, after she has had been in a grade six class for a week: "He is already doing better. Why is that?" Added Walter Shawin, research director of Kelowna, B.C.-based Masters Airframe Technology Ltd.: "An actual aircraft electronics manufacturer... It breaks my heart when I get 50 to 180 applications for a job at my plant and none is suitable. They are coming out of high school with minimal skills."

To better prepare students for the workforce and the job market, some parents and lobby groups want to return to a more traditional education system. By raising the three R's and testing students more often, say critics' Holmes, it might be possible to improve literacy and self-esteem. The greatest demand, the students' parents say, is for more social and vocational background from high school graduates.

## ADDING UP THE MARKS

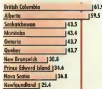
### DECLINING SKILLS

Since 1966, the Toronto-based textbook-publishing firm Nelson Canada has periodically tested Grade 6 students in English-language schools in all provinces except Quebec. The tests covered a variety of basic skills, from reading comprehension to mathematics. Compared with last season in 1988, scores in 1991 had dropped in all areas tested by the following percentages:



### IN THE LABORATORY

Usage in 1991 by students in their first high-school year who took part in the Second International Science Study, between 1983 and 1986. The average score nationally was 54.5 per cent.



### CANADA'S RANKING

One of the most recent comprehensive international surveys of educational standards took place two years ago, when 15-year-old students in 15 countries participated in the second International Assessment of Educational Progress. A random sample of 3,000 students in each country answered more than 100 questions in science and mathematics. And as has been the case in previous studies, Canadian students in the middle of the competition. The average grades:

1991	SCIENCE	1991	MATH	1991
1	SOUTH KOREA	78	SOUTH KOREA	73
2	TAIWAN	74	TAIWAN	71
3	SWITZERLAND	74	SWITZERLAND	71
4	HUNGARY	73	SOVIET UNION	70
5	SOVIET UNION	71	HUNGARY	68
6	SLOVENIA	70	FRANCE	64
7	ITALY	70	ITALY	64
8	ISRAEL	70	ISRAEL	64
9	CANADA	68	CANADA	62
10	FRANCE	68	SCOTLAND	61
11	SCOTLAND	66	IRELAND	61
12	SPAIN	66	SLOVENIA	57
13	UNITED STATES	67	SPAIN	55
14	IRELAND	63	UNITED STATES	55
15	JORDAN	61	JORDAN	40

\*From Edward Schmitt test reports.



Herb Ross teaching children to think independently

added that a change to a more structured system, in which all children begin at the same place in the curriculum and study the same material, will allow most to advance together. Those who failed tests could get remedial help. Many teachers also advocate a return to a more basic approach. Said Freedman's 16-year-old "Maybe we should go back more to basics, because right now we have to pass everyone. The kids know it, so they don't do any work."

Some critics predict that unless the quality of Canadian education improves soon, parents will begin demanding the kind of changes that the British government has resisted to give some parents in England a bigger voice in education. Under legislation passed in 1988, publicly funded schools in England can break away from local school boards and receive funding directly from the national education ministry. Because funding for such schools is determined partly by enrollment, the system encourages schools to boost their academic standards as a way of attracting students.

Concerned Nova Scotia is proposing a version of the British system for their province. According to M.A. Kimball, the education committee chair, he claims he suggested that the provincial government channel grants of about \$4,500—the average cost of educating a child in the province for a year—to private schools to cover the costs of educating children who otherwise are in danger of failing or dropping out of school. Kimball said that,

because schools producing better results would attract more students, such a plan would force public schools, which are sensibly funded according to enrollment, to become more competitive.

But while some Canadians are pushing for a return to basics, Premier Bob Rae's New

demest learners—will be free to go to any kind of class. The policy, Sloppe said, will ensure equal opportunities for all students. At the same time, the province will introduce a new "benchmark" method to evaluate student performance. It will provide teachers with guidelines—in some cases on videotapes—for determining students' levels of development, but there will be no standardized examinations. Said Sloppe: "I believe you can have both equality and academic excellence."

Some critics insist that the Ontario experiment is a striking example of what is wrong with education in Canada. Horst Schwemmer, president of the Ontario Teachers' Federation, said that the benchmarks and de-streaming courses inherent conflicts that inhibit against high academic results. He said that because students inevitably have different abilities, they will have to be measured differently to keep all of them advancing through the course. Some critics of de-streaming say that such a situation will lead to a lowering of academic standards. Meanwhile, the battle between the defenders of child-centered learning and those

who are pressing for a return to basics seems likely to intensify. It's a debate that could have immense consequences for Canada. In the struggle between advocates of child-centered learning, the well being of the nation's children is at stake.

TOM FINNELL with correspondent reports



In the gym: the well-being of Canada's children is at stake

Democratic Party government in Ontario is moving the province's education system in the opposite direction. Currently, Ontario students are divided into basic, general or advanced levels in high school. Education Minister Tony Sloppe said that when the separation of students into different streams ends next year, all Grade 9 students—including the brightest and the

## FINISHING IN A CERTAIN STYLE

As a growing number of parents ditch family budgets to afford the private school alternative to a public school education, affluent Canadians can consider a more exotic option: sending their children to Europe for a year of post-secondary education. Two independent schools in Europe cater to the needs of Canadian students. Neuchâtel Junior College, in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, 125 km west of Zurich, and Lycee Canadian de France, just outside the city of Nice on the French Riviera, offer programs for young Canadians at their final years of high school. The schools claim high rates of acceptance for their graduates by leading Canadian and U.S. universities.

Despite lagging secondary credentials in Canada, the 17-year-old school at

Neuchâtel, which is owned by the Swiss municipality, has a normal enrollment this year of 81 students. Based in Mackay, who represents the school in Ontario, Ont., said that enrollment will probably grow slightly to 95 in the 1993-1994 school year. But enrollment at the seven-year-old Lycee in Nice, owned and operated by Toronto-based travel entrepreneur Sam Bytke's firm, Bytke & Co., is at about 75 students, about 25 fewer than usual. School officials attributed the decline to economic conditions.

The cost of going to one of the Canadian schools in Europe is about the same as in the most expensive private boarding schools in Canada. At Neuchâtel tuition, room and board with a French-speaking Swiss family for a full year comes to about \$81,500. At the slightly less expensive Lycee, tuition, room and board comes to about \$18,500 for one semester and \$19,900 for a full year. At Harvard College, a private girls' school in Toronto, the basic fees for boarders for a year come to \$30,530.

But expenses at the two overseas schools can skyrocket when students take part in tempting extracurricular trips. Typically, in November, Neuchâtel students make a five-day visit to Belgium. There are also two-week trips to Spain and Morocco in Christmas, and to Greece and Italy at Easter. Each two-week trip costs between \$2,800 and \$2,800. In between, there are optional weekend jaunts costing an average of \$300. Similarly, the Lycee offers European trips every semester, as well as a semester Kenya at a cost of about \$4,000 per student.

For Mackay, whose daughter is a Neuchâtel graduate, the expense was worth it. "It's marvelous preparation for university in that they learn to be independently away from home," said Mackay. Still, for most Canadians it is a luxury far beyond their reach.

NORA UNDERWOOD



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# HOW EXPERIMENTAL SHOULD EDUCATION BE?

WHILE SEVERAL PROVINCES HEAD BACK TO BASICS, OTHERS ARE MOVING TOWARDS MORE LIBERAL CHILD-CENTRED POLICIES. A NATIONAL BREAKDOWN:

## POLICIES AND GOALS:



## NEW DIRECTIONS:



BRITISH COLUMBIA	ALBERTA	SASKATCHEWAN	MANITOBA	ONTARIO	QUEBEC	NEW BRUNSWICK	PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND	NOVA SCOTIA	NEWFOUNDLAND
<p>Education officials say that their main goal is to reduce the 34.9 per cent dropout rate by expanding the use of child-centred educational practices. In September, 1991, the province launched the first phase of its Year 2000 program that will gradually eliminate traditional grade levels in elementary school and expand the application of child-centred education, which allows children to learn at their own pace, independently and in groups.</p> <p>The new reforms will put British Columbia at the forefront of child-centred education in Canada. One feature of the new reforms will allow high-school students to combine courses with technology training. In some cases, they may take community college courses alongside traditional high-school studies, enabling them to graduate with marketable skills.</p>	<p>Since 1984, the province's education ministry has ordered schools to conduct regular testing to measure student progress. Student Progress Reviews are promoted as a consistent, doubly meaningful education. "We make the judgment on the process—not on whether or not the child is feeling good, but by measuring what is learned."</p> <p>While other provinces, including British Columbia and Ontario, are moving more towards liberal child-centred educational goals, Alberta is setting basic standards that students must reach.</p>	<p>The province launched reforms in 1985 that established a core curriculum and expanded the use of child-centred learning practices.</p> <p>Provincial officials say they are trying to respond to parental demands for more emphasis on the basics while maintaining a curriculum that provides, officials say, products with needed individuality. The educational ministry plans to set up an Education Innovation Forum to consider new educational proposals.</p>	<p>Provincial officials say they are trying to respond to parental demands for more emphasis on the basics while maintaining a curriculum that provides, officials say, products with needed individuality. The educational ministry plans to set up an Education Innovation Forum to consider new educational proposals.</p> <p>In an effort to improve literacy levels, Manitoba has set up a program to help students who have left school to upgrade their reading abilities. Another program is aimed at keeping more children in school.</p>	<p>Policy of dividing grade 9 high-school students into advanced, low and general learning levels, leaving out students free to take any course at their will, regardless of its academic standing. A change is designed give more opportunities to children from low-income homes and cost intensive. Ontario means firmly committed to child-centred educational practices.</p> <p>In an effort to improve literacy levels, Manitoba has set up a program to help students who have left school to upgrade their reading abilities. Another program is aimed at keeping more children in school.</p>	<p>In an effort to reduce the province's 30 per cent dropout rate, the provincial government has set aside \$40 million to pay for new programs aimed at keeping students in school. One project earmarks \$15 million for a primary school breakfast and lunch program. In another, second-year school students will have more access to technical courses. Quebec is committed to child-centred education.</p> <p>Because of the high proportion of children from immigrant and single-parent families in Quebec, the province's schools have launched programs that try to integrate family and schoolwork, including supervised in-school homework.</p>	<p>Beginning in September, schools will place more emphasis on teaching reading, arithmetic and science, and on testing students. As part of the back-to-basics thrust, schools will cut back on activities that distract from teaching subjects.</p> <p>Virtually alone among provincial political leaders, Liberal Premier Frank McKenna has been strongly critical of current educational practices, meeting that better schooling is the key to boosting New Brunswick's economy.</p>	<p>Provincial education officials say that they are firmly committed to the principles of child-centred education.</p> <p>To more closely involve parents, a provincial task force on education proposed last year that schools be allowed to create elected parents' councils that would have part in the development of school policies. The province is also attempting to decide what knowledge students should have at each grade level.</p>	<p>While continuing to embrace the principles of child-centred education, the province plans to put more emphasis on the teaching of core subjects, including mathematics and science.</p> <p>The legislature's standing committee on education wants to make schools responsible for the academic achievement of their students. If the committee's proposals are adopted, the province could publish test results to spur competition among schools. Those producing better students would attract more students and, as a result, increased funding.</p>	<p>In a back-to-basics move, the province introduced a mandatory parenting and evaluation system in September aimed at ensuring that students learn the curriculum. The province is also putting more emphasis on core subjects, including reading and writing.</p> <p>Dedicated enrollment in the largely denominational school system has forced the province to consider merging public and denominational schools to form a more integrated system. That would give the province more resources to spend on improving the delivery of its care curriculum.</p>
34.9	35.8	24.7	27.6	35.8	33.6	15.7	22.6	26.8	29
21.7	20.3	26.7	28.5	21.9	25	29.2	28.5	29.2	31.5
96.5	94.8	99.7	96.9	99.3	89.5	96	95	96.1	96.1

\*Students who dropped out of school by the age of 18.

SOURCE: BRITISH COLUMBIA, ECONOMIC COUNCIL OF CANADA



Byt with soon Austin (center) and Jacob: "we just felt we had to do something"

## NEW ACTIVISTS

### ANGRY PARENTS PRESS FOR CHANGE

WHAT'S  
HAPPENING  
AT  
SCHOOL?

When Christine Bender called a meeting of parents with complaints about the quality of education in Queneville, a town 60 km north of Toronto, last February, she was expecting about 50 people to attend. But more than 250 showed up, and Parents in Action, the group that grew from that meeting, now has about 600 members. Across Canada, thousands of parents are banding together angrily in many organizations, demanding changes in the personally run school systems.

The dissatisfaction is deepening among parents, largely over drastic departures from the traditional methods of teaching reading and writing. A Gallup poll released in September showed that 56 per cent of Canadians were dissatisfied with the way schools were teaching their children. Dissatisfaction was highest in British Columbia (63 per cent of those polled) and Ontario (61 per cent). Many parents are critical of the techniques being used in the classroom, particularly at junior levels. And their outrage is finding expression that goes beyond just criticizing the school system; they also are organizing groups to pressure school boards and governments for change. So far, their success has been limited, but they have given voice to a new lead of educational activists.

Says Daphne Rancan, a Winnipeg mother of three and co-leader of Parents for Better, a group that is lobbying the Manitoba government: "Parents just cannot afford to sit by quietly anymore."

Christine Bender's experience with school officials in Queneville is typical of the complaints levelled by parents. She said that by the time her son, Charles, who is now 13, finished the third grade five years ago, he could barely read or spell. Worse, says Bender, his teachers seemed unconcerned. "Every time I went to see them they said, 'Don't worry, everything will come together,'" Bender recalls.

**Dramatic:** Concerns like Bender's have led to increasing numbers of middle-class parents to stretch their household budgets and send their children to costly private schools. There are now an estimated 1,515 of those institutions across the country, up from 1,121 a decade ago. Private school enrollment has climbed to an estimated 250,140 in 1990/1991 from 223,687 then—a 15-per-cent increase. In the same period, public school enrollment increased by about five per cent. As dramatic as the increase in numbers is the change in the student body because some middle-class parents are living both in public schools, the ones are long gone where private schools were strictly for the children of well-to-do "old boys" who

had attended the institutions.

In most cases, the organized parent movement over the public schools has arisen from discontent over the quality—or even existence—of the address parental concerns. However, and two other Winnipeg mothers and that they decided to join forces after Winnipeg school board officials brushed off their questions about the quality of education that their children were receiving. Their petition demanding that the provincial government reform the Manitoba education system now has more than 3,000 signatures. In the case of Ronald Hoyt, a money-company executive and father of two grade-school-aged boys in Dartmouth, N.S., he felt compelled to act last spring after returning from a vacation and learning that the local school board planned to make massive cuts in spending. He and other concerned citizens launched an organization called Reader. In late September, the new group sent questionnaires to the parents of every student in Nova Scotia schools in an effort to identify problems in the education system. "None of us knew even what you would call academics," explains Hoyt, 38. "We just felt that we had no choice but to do something."

Although parental complaints are widespread, most seem to be based on the belief that children are simply not being taught the basics. Their children, they say, do not know how to read, write or understand the fundamentals of mathematics. At the root of much of the problem, in their view, is widespread application of the teaching philosophy known as "child-centred learning," which emphasizes that the child, not the teacher, determines the pace of learning in the lower grades. Students typically spend highly of the space. Mike Rancan, for one, a 12-year-old Grade 6 pupil at Cornwall Junior 8 in Halifax, says that there is still more than enough emphasis on the fundamentals of reading and writing. Said Rancan: "I think the teachers are doing a pretty good job."

Despite their grassroots beginnings, many parent groups are proving to be clunky tactics. Well-educated and politically sophisticated, parents say that they are energetically trying to build their memberships to a level that education authorities would be unable to ignore. The groups use petitions, newsletters and intense lobbying to attract support from politicians, school board members and parents. However, most parent groups concede that their efforts have so far achieved little more than getting school boards and politicians to begin to pay attention. "They know that there are people out there who are unhappy and they are making a little noise," says Bender. And as long as the school system appears to be serving their children's needs, many parents say that they will keep up the pressure.

JOHN McWHIRTER is a freelance writer in Toronto.

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# YEAR 2000 OR BUST

## CONTROVERSY DOGS A B.C. PROGRAM

WHAT'S  
WORTH  
A  
SCHOOL?

Properly at 8:45 a.m., the children filed exactly into the second-floor classroom in Vancouver's Lord Taylor Elementary School. Moning to class arranged around small tables, the pupils, ranging in age from five to eight years old, sat down in pairs and began reading. The classroom scene, played out daily in the school

for five-year-old sister Rachel. The focus of much of the girls' attention was Brandon McEwen, a scrapping eight-year-old who plays hockey and football. McEwen said that he did not mind sitting on the floor and helping younger children after the teacher gathered the class for a story reading. Said McEwen: "There are a lot of younger kids who want to do what the older kids are doing. And the older



Vancouver elementary school students learning at their own rate

kids help the younger ones. I think the class is kind of great."

**Segment:** The province's schools have been introducing the new program gradually over the past three years. Until last year, the Primary program was optional, but all schools have now had to implement it. They will introduce the intermediate program gradually, beginning in 1994. The Graduation segment, which is still in the planning stage, will be put in place in 1995.

Part of the thinking behind the program is that learning by investigation and the advancement of students by stages, with regular

tests and examinations, are antiquated concepts. Ian Stark, principal of the 350-pupil Pausanias Elementary School in Prince Rupert, 800 km north of Vancouver, characterizes the Year 2000 program as "flexible, and revolution." We will teach the three Rs. But we also look at more complex issues, at new assessment and evaluation strategies. We look at the whole child."

But some parents say that they are suspicious of the new system. Debbie Helgeson, a homemaker who lives in Prince Rupert, has two children, Steven, 13, and Lindsay, 9, at Pausanias. Helgeson says that it was easier for her to tell how her son was doing at school, because until this year Steven was graded in his subjects. But now both Steven and Lindsay's work is described in the new "anecdotal reports." In Steven's most recent report card, teachers called him "unmotivated" and "co-operative," but said that he needed to "make sure all assignments are completely done to the best of his ability." Said Helgeson: "With Steven's grades—A, B and C with comments—I could get a feeling for what areas he might need work in. I read Lindsay's five or six times and I'm still not sure what it really means."

**Future:** Psychologist James Stanger of the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, who sat on a university committee that studied the Year 2000 program, also opposes the abandonment of grading. Stanger said that the competitive atmosphere will make it easier for students to graduate, but it will not prepare them for the future. Said Stanger: "There is no incentive the last that in our society equidates in reward and failure is not."

Other education specialists say that the existing school system had to be changed to remove competitive aspects that led many students to drop out. Said Maurice Gibbons, an education specialist at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby: "There is a lot of social trauma out there. We have to start thinking of the classroom as lonely and not

as a factory." According to Patricia Helton, an education consultant at Simon Fraser, a basic tenet of the new program is that learning proceeds at different rates and in different ways among individual students. Said Helton: "We have to trust that children can learn on their own. We are teaching the child to make choices. I hope everyone will let this system run for eight years and then decide if it works." The risks, say critics who oppose the new approach, is that the children will suffer for taking part in a controversial educational experiment.

HAL QUINN in Vancouver

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COVER

# CLASSROOM SURVIVORS

## TEACHERS TALK FROM THE FRONT LINES

**WILLIE'S MEANS IT COUNTS!** Free elementary and high school teachers from across Canada talked to Maclean's about the challenges and frustrations of their jobs. They note that the classroom isn't just about students themselves are changing, especially the pressure that now is placed on young children. *Excerpt:*

**Elisa Masson, 33, has been teaching English and drama at Doyle High School in the northwest Ontario town of 6,500 for the past five years.**

I don't think anything can really prepare you for what's going to happen in the classroom. I had been a teacher for two weeks when a Grade 9 boy brought a gun to school. There was a standoff, but it was handled really well. After that, I felt vulnerable walking down the halls, especially because I was new in town.

I'm not sure that the high-school curriculum has really changed, but I don't remember being as rowdy as the students I have. The students

really want fun and immediate results. They have a strong sense of their own rights without a sense of the responsibility that should go along with it. I feel it's really important for me to know what's going on in television, movies and music. The students respond a lot better if you use them as individuals and have a sense of who they are. There's a song called Smith Like Time Spent by the rock group Nervosa. One of the lyrics I use made me say, "Here we are now, entertain us." On my bad days, that goes through my head.

You've usually got one or two students in your class for whom almost nothing seems to work. But if you come to with a couple of clearly defined rules and you're consistent and fair to implement them, things usually work out. I've only sent students to the office a couple of times and when I do I always feel that I've broken some way, that there was something I would have done. Many parents are very supportive, but many don't seem to care. You don't see many of the parents at parent-teacher inter-

**Allen in Montreal: 'Kids have more pressure in their lives'**

views. I think that parents have to realize that teachers have a lot to deal with and that parents have to take some responsibility.

**Rhonda Rivers has spent 12 of her 20 years as a teacher in Halifax junior high and high schools. This year, Rivers, 45, is teaching physical education to students at Highland Park Junior High.**

Last year, I was teaching junior high for the first time in quite a while. These are the children that are sort of feeling their hormones, and basically this is the age where kids are in a quantity. Kids are lacking a lot of self-esteem, and a lot of our programs are designed to help that. Compared to when I was in school, I look at the kids as in some respects a little more mature, but also lacking commitment, lacking dedication and at times lacking a focus.

Today, so much of the focus is on the dollar. Kids are arranging their classes as high school so they can work. Kids are coming ahead of school in a lot of cases, and it's pretty sad. These kids are looking to work whenever they can, to get money to get \$100 sneakers on their feet.

I think the majority of them are getting a good education, but I'm more concerned about those students who aren't as motivated as others to channel themselves into programs that would take them some place. People draw the analogy that at the office graduating from high school was like graduating from university now. These kids may graduate with no qualifications.

Before, you used to be able to put your head on a teacher's arm and say, "Pay attention."

Nowadays, you'll get somebody saying, "You can't touch me." There are a few more people who are confrontational. I think a lot of students are not committed, are not focused. They're there because they have to be.

**Sandra Taylor-Turn, 32, has taught high-school level English at a Second Language for the past 10 years. This year, because of cuts at the high-school level, she has moved to Conquest Community School in Calgary, where**

of others, of the world around them.

When you're on the front lines, you really do see where the kids are at. It might not know what the solutions are, but you see the problems. The frustration comes from spending myself to really helping teachers, social workers, psychologists, policemen. I come home wondering how well I've done. I would like to see a school as more of a community centre, offering services that the kids are needing more and more. We could play our roles more effectively.

choices as well. And I guess we were all sort of lulled with a lot of idealism. I think I detect a lot more cynicism in some ways. We've got to give our students a sense of hope.

There are a lot of signals out there that even a post-secondary education will not make people a breather. There are a lot of students with jobs now. Another of staff here make the point that even though the money may look good now, they should look at graduation and a degree and job training as the ultimate goal.

I think the education now is at least as good and possibly better than the one I received. There's more awareness of a lot of things like individual differences, learning styles. There's a lot more choice. I think among educators today there's a genuine effort to get to know each student as best we can. I think there's a greater sensitivity now. One of the positives about being a teacher is our clientele never changes in age, and I find that one of the reasons why I'm progressing and open-minded is the influx of young people working with us.

**John Allen, 52, has taught high school at Montreal for 31 years. He now teaches Grade 10 physical sciences and Grade 11 chemistry at Atholfield High School in suburban Paroiss.**

The high-school classroom has not changed all that much, which is amazing considering the number of years between when I was in school and today. There are still many traditional classroom with desks to rows and the teacher in front doing most of the talking. And that's a little disappointing, because a lot has happened in educational theory. I think many teachers are in classrooms on the people they are teaching when they were youngsters. Also, the teachers' colleges really don't prepare us for innovative teaching techniques or practices. I think we must be about the slowest part of society to change.

One of the things I'm trying this year is the cooperative approach to learning at the Grade 10 level. Kids work in groups of three or four. They're given a task and they have to decide how they're going to proceed. Then they evaluate the methods they've chosen. I've been successful. The class makes it that no one of us is as smart as all of us put together. They're starting to feel that they're real people, worthy of respect.

The kids at today's high school have so many more pressures and tensions at home than when I was in school. There were more opportunities for jobs, and today the pressures on the kids to compete are great. They see single-parent families, disruptions in their lives, medical problems, social problems. They live the consequences of the problems that I'm not talking. I don't carry them. They need all the support they can get. They need a more compassionate, more caring school. I wouldn't trade places with them for anything. □

**Taylor-Turn, Rivers (below): 'these kids may graduate with no marketability'**

she will help children from Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and elsewhere learn English.

To always wanted to be a teacher, but my parents were so different then when I went into it. I really wanted to support knowledge. What we do is create curiosity, we let it and feed it. That's why I stay in education. The reality once you're in there is far different. What I saw teachers doing was very traditional.

There were 30 high-achieving students sitting there in rows and the teacher was imparting knowledge that we have the global community at our fingertips. Now we have multimedia students. The schools have very high percentages of people from other countries. Our decision makers are still thinking in terms of white middle-class students.

I think education means learning how to learn. I don't think it has anything to do with the actual curriculum. Children need to learn how to ask questions of themselves.

I think that the public schools are an excellent place for the type of education that children need to exist in a multicultural society. I think that's where the real learning and education takes place, in the interaction with other students. Someone may say, "What about the basics?" And I think, of course, that has to happen too. If people in the schools know what their roles are, then that will happen.

**Douglas Sill, 41, has been teaching social studies at Atholfield, Calgary's lastest in the city. Sill, for the past 18 years. He is also mayor of the northern Saskatchewan town, graduated from the school and has a 16-year-old daughter in Grade 11 there.**

I think probably one of the biggest changes in that society has changed in education. I guess when I went to school about 25 years ago, the pace of life was a lot different. There were probably far fewer pressures on students and probably fewer



# THE READING DEBATE

## EXPERTS DISAGREE ON THE BEST METHODS



When Andrew Schuster was 10, his parents became concerned about the difficulties he was having in reading and writing. At his school in Guelph, Ont., teachers used the increasingly prevalent Whole Language approach to teach reading, a method in which students learn to recognize words in the context of stories. When the boy's teachers said that Andrew, who was now 13, was learning to read at his own pace, July and

that nobody thinks Whole Language works for all students. It doesn't."

The Schusters are among the thousands of Canadians caught up in a debate about learning to read that is as heated as it is heartfelt. Everyone involved—teachers, parents and parents—claims to want only what is best for the children. But when it comes to teaching reading, there is simply no agreement as to which approach is best. In recent years, the Whole Language movement, which grew out

of teachers who, instead of focusing on meaning, focused on letter sounds or isolated word drills," he said. "A word in isolation has no meaning."

Whole Language stands tradition on its head. Such older approaches to phonics use small units of language like building blocks to construct ever-larger units—first words, then words, then sentences, then entire stories that Whole Language teaching starts at the other end. Experts say that the Whole Language

to recognize common words and guess the meaning of unfamiliar ones from their context. Duke observes that young people "come to reading as naturally as they come to talking, provided that we show them to do so."

Advocates of the Whole Language system generally say that children should be allowed to develop at their own pace. Teachers who adhere to the system do not usually correct young people's spelling and grammar errors, so the theory that in writing, as in learning to talk, children begin with approximation and experimentation and move towards accuracy. The ultimate goal of the movement, says Duke, is to produce children who "enjoy learning and want

Teachers College in Trent, steeped in Whole Language training. This, working as a substitute teacher in Grades 1 through 12, she used a phonics-based approach to tutor students who were having difficulties with reading. She said that she found the phonics system to be more effective than Whole Language. School administrators in Nova Scotia, she says, seemed to be staunch Whole Language adherents. "If you wanted to use phonics, in general you would have to bootstrap it into the classroom," she recalls. In 1989, Kline founded her own small private school, St. Joseph's Academy, in Stettin, N.S. She and her staff took a back-to-basics approach to teaching, rooted in what

psychiatry at the University of British Columbia, contends that the Whole Language system is at the root of many of the difficulties that children encounter in school. "The more we try to learn to read and spell," says Kline, "is a primary cause of emotional problems in children and adolescents in North America." According to Kline, numerous academic studies have shown that no method of teaching reading is equal to or superior to phonics. Said Kline: "If you know phonics, there is no way you can be a lousy speller."

Depending on who is doing the grading, Whole Language can get anything from straight A's to straight F's. Like many academic studies, Duke Williams' was marred by a flaw: one of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in Toronto, says that she is skeptical of the contention by Whole Language proponents that learning to read is an abstract process, as in learning to speak. But Williams praises the movement for "focusing on the importance of making learning a meaningful, motivating experience." Some critics of current educational trends say that responsibility for teaching children to read must be shared by the parents themselves. "To get a child to learn how to read, you have to do explicit reading with them for at least 15 minutes a day," says Joanne Thompson, a Vancouver nurse who has two daughters in grade school. "You can't do that with a group of 28 kids and one teacher. My husband works and I work, but we have to make the time for the children's reading."

Centred in December, 1991, the authoritative quarterly *Journal of Educational Psychology* published a review of studies comparing Whole Language with other letter-to-sound methods. The author, Frank R. Yellison, a professor of educational psychology at the State University of New York at Albany, concluded that phonics-based teaching was slightly more effective than Whole Language instruction. Said Yellison: "Children need to be taught the alphabetic code directly." He added that a blended approach—looking at words in context in addition to letter-by-letter in context—is superior to either method on its own.

Many schoolteachers endorse that belief. Said Jack Black, principal of an Elementary School in Prince Rupert, B.C.: "Well-trained teachers take tools—phonics and Whole Language—and apply them as they are needed. They are not checking out tools that work." Still, the level of concern among parents who want their children to be better readers suggests that there are at least some fundamental disagreements about the use of these tools in the classrooms of the nation.

PAMELA WILSON with RAE QUINN in Vancouver



Homework fever: one critic advises parents to 'school-proof' their children against the Whole Language approach

James Schuster asked an independent testing agency to assess their son's reading ability. The tests, which he took when he was starting Grade 5, showed that he was reading at a Grade 3 level. After nine months of private tutoring by teachers who emphasized the more traditional method of using phonics to sound out letters and syllables, Andrew's reading level had improved by two grades. The Schusters say that their ardent son, 13-year-old Michael, was taught to read by the Whole Language method, but he taught himself the phonics system as well. As a result, the Grade 7 student now reads at a Grade 11 level. Said July Schuster of the Whole Language system: "It worked fine for Michael. But I can't believe

of a number of educational theories about 25 years ago, has been gaining popularity. One Cochrane, a Winnipeg grade-school principal, estimates that perhaps one-quarter of Canada's primary schools now use the movement's teaching methods. He is president of The Whole Language Umbrella, a 27,500-member international organization that he says regards learning as an "exciting journey" activity. Whole Language advocates such as Cochrane argue that traditional forms of teaching instruction, with their emphasis on rote teaching, spelling and grammar, can take the fun out of learning—and put many children off reading for life. "I see many children who have been taught how not to read by well-intentioned

systems is particularly useful for teaching reading to children whose parents did not read to them at an early age. In the classroom, teachers help children to recognize words in the context of stories. The learning process is embedded through other subjects, so that a child learning about dinosaurs will learn to associate the word with the prehistoric creature. "Once children get control of the whole story, then they can get down to the bits and pieces of language," explained David B. Doak, a former professor of education at Acadia University in Wolfville, N.S., and one of Canada's most prominent Whole Language theorists. Gradually, through what Duke calls "immersion in a rich, written-language environment," children learn



The Schusters assessing the children of taking part in a costly, failed experiment

to go on learning for the rest of their lives." Still, some teachers, teachers and parents who with Guelph parent Schuster they insist that Whole Language is a costly, failed experiment. One of the most vocal opponents is Gerald Slocum, a St. Albert, Alta., human-resources adviser who founded the Reading and Literacy Institute of Alberta in 1986. "Whole Language people believe that children learn at their own pace in their own time," says Slocum. "But a lot of them aren't motivated or don't learn without direct instruction."

Among the nearly 1,000 subscribers to the publisher's five times-a-year newsletter is Stettin, N.S., educator Elizabeth Skiles. In 1986, she graduated from the Nova Scotia

she calls "good old-fashioned hard work." Another outspoken opponent of the Whole Language system is Dr. Carl Kline, a Vancouver-based child psychiatrist who retired in 1990 after practicing for 38 years. According to Kline, the problems associated with use of the Whole Language approach, along with phonics, that is part of British Columbia's new, child-centred educational program in public schools are "so serious that we are advising parents to school-proof their children by teaching them how to read phonetically before they get into Grade 1. If they can read phonetically, they are in a very protected against the system."

Kline, a former associate professor of child

## NOT SO SUPER SUPERNATURAL

In her latest book, *Give Up the Ghost*, Watkinson, Ont.-based author Victoria Braden takes aim at both supernatural phenomena and the field of science that claims to explain them, parapsychology. Although she acknowledges that people really do see apparitions, Braden says that modern science actually can explain many such incidents. "Ghosts are caused by the people who see them," Braden adds. "But when I argue that supernatural interpretations of events are illogical, I become very unpopular. People want to believe in the supernatural."



Cole: 'Absolutely' a feminist

## HOLY HOLLY

Overage with her jazz trio, Holly Cole evokes both sultry sassiness and homages to—*a combination that is in full show in My Foolish Heart*, an hour-long documentary-concert film about the singer and the recording of her 1991 album, *Home Is on My Mind*, which airs this week on the CanWest Global TV network. Although she acknowledges that she strives to present a "dark sexuality" onstage, Toronto-based Cole, 39, says that she is "absolutely" a feminist. "I you're a feminist," she adds, "it doesn't mean that you have no sexuality."

## Too real

To prepare for his role in *Airline*, a new movie based on the 1972 story of a Ukrainian man whose members resorted to cannibalism after their plane crashed in the Andes, Montreal native Bruce Ramsay took a cue from his psychiatrist, Jeffrey "The debater who the history of people to help them figure things out," Ramsay said, "and I create a history for my characters to help me figure out their motivations." The Los Angeles-based actor added that his research for playing the part of Caroline Tress included meeting the plane-crash survivor in person. "It was a little spooky because the two of us are very much alike," Ramsay said. "It's a pilot like I am and we have the same grumpy voice." But clearly Ramsay, who says that he plans to visit Tress in Uruguay next year, hopes that the similarities will be character red herrings. "I think I am going to have to take a plane trip over the Andes," he added. "I guess after playing this role, I should be nervous about that trip."



Ramsay: 'I guess I should be nervous'

## A TITAN BOWS OUT

After John Daly's massive drives and dejected approach to the game have made him one of the sport's most popular stars, but after his meteoric rise to stardom, which began with his starting win in the 1991 PGA Championship, Daly, 36, crash-landed last week when he dropped out of competition indefinitely to seek treatment for alcohol abuse. The decision followed an accident on Dec. 26, when he allegedly assaulted his wife of eight months in their Castle Rock, Colo., home. Daly said in a statement that he would return to tournament play "only when I am comfortable my life is as a caddy." As a result, he will miss the next Tour's first event, the Jan. 7-9 Inland Tournament of Champions in Carlsbad, Calif. Tournament co-director Margaret Brougher said that the pillars for last year's event crumbled with Daly in the fall. "We were really excited when he qualified, and disappointed when he dropped out," said Brougher. "But his personal life comes first, and we wish him well."

Daly: a meteoric rise and a crash landing



## The politics of satire

In *Not Politically Correct*, Vancouver writer *The Dolphins* tries to ask: "Was Columbus a great explorer or a nasty European papist-whore?" Sales of the book, which satirizes political correctness, have been brisk. Dolphin said—except in Vancouver, where the distributor's warehouse was stocked with only 225 copies. "The guy in the warehouse had long grey hair," Dolphin added. "He might have been too politically correct to like my book."

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Gulf War scene with U.S. Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf (left), a Nintendo-like game

## TELEVISION

# Shadows of war

A journalist revisits the Gulf conflict

ACTS OF WAR  
(CBC, Jan. 30, 12, 13, 8 p.m.)

It has been New Year's address to the Iraqi people. Saddam Hussein vowed to return his devastated country to glory. "Our aspirations are to establish a modern, developed and united society—a society that will be a leader in the Arab nation," the president declared in Baghdad, frequently alluding to the continuing struggle between "the forces of good and evil." Meanwhile, in Washington, his archival, President George Bush was preparing to visit the White House, rejected by an electorate preoccupied with domestic, rather than foreign, affairs. The fact that the resurgent Hussein remains in office 32 months after the American-led international coalition routed his forces, while the victorious Bush now plans his retirement, is perhaps the most striking paradox of the Persian Gulf War. But a superb new documentary, *Acts of War*, elegantly illustrates far subtler nuances surrounding the 1991 campaign to liberate Kuwait.

Conceived and written by executive producer and veteran Canadian journalist Michael Maclean, the compelling three-hour special, which begins airing six days before the second anniversary of the start of the battle, astutely

chronicles the world's best televised high-tech war. Tightly edited and powerfully scripted, the program outlines the course of the conflict, from its roots in the Western powers' aversion of Iraq during its eight-year war with Iran in the 1980s, to the century-plus tale behind Kuwait's freedom. Narrated by actor Christopher Plummer, the documentary interweaves arresting archival footage from a variety of sources with revealing interviews with an impressive array of the war's key participants—including Arab leaders, Western military commanders and prominent members of Bush's inner circle.

But *Acts of War* transcends straightforward chronology. It also focuses on how both sides claimed the most high ground and manipulated the media for their own propaganda purposes. "From the start, the war is heavily censored—1,200 Western reporters only almost entirely on military briefings," the documentary points out. "The most televised event in history plays little but spectacle." To further emphasize the point, dramatic studio re-enactments of on-the-record statements made by Bush (Robert Costello) and Hussein (Eliot Akin) underscore the power of both rhetoric and personality in the conduct of the war. "The two chief protagonists were using the media as television theatre to personalise events and thus simplify

them," Maclean told *Maclean's*. "What impresses me is always how each side saw war becoming more sophisticated in the way it is mediated, and thus the more war becomes that much easier to sell."

Maclean is certainly familiar with conflict—and with the documentary form. A seasoned foreign correspondent, he has reported from away of the world's hot spots in a sometimes controversial career that has spanned four decades. In 1989, he released *The Ten Thousand Day War*, an exhaustive, 26-part documentary on Vietnam, to international acclaim. His latest effort, while more limited in scope, is multifaceted—the type of second that was largely lacking while the Gulf War was underway. *Acts of War* outlines how the United States armed Hussein, initially attempted to sell itself apart from his border dispute with Kuwait, and finally realized that "its biggest military client" was "out of control."

The dazzling use of high-tech "satellite boomer" made the war appear to be "near invisible," *Acts of War* argues. Military leaders attempted to sanitize the configuration, steering the success of precision bombing—even though smart bombs accounted for only seven per cent of the total tonnage dropped on Iraq. Ultimately, the media became the war's focus, for program events to the British veteran Middle East correspondent Robert Pate. "They became a conflict down which the military could flow and the message would win out the other end to the reader or the viewer. They became, in effect, useful propaganda."

But the Pentagon leaders were not at all shy of propaganda. The dramatic re-enactments of statements made by Bush and Hussein show how they personalized the conflict, turning it into "a test of survival television series." Although it is initially difficult to suspend disbelief during these segments, which make up only 35 to 40 per cent of the total documentary, they eventually become effective. Bush compares Hussein to Hitler. Hussein depicts himself as a protector of Islam, a leader who has been betrayed by imperialist forces. And the stark studio setting in which the actors are filmed, surrounded by video monitors, further emphasizes the uncanny of the war's TV images. Said Maclean: "It points out the dangers of live propaganda—the emotional excitation that can result with each side briefly able to communicate, yet always talking past each other to their own constituencies."

*Acts of War* is a must-see for both supporters and opponents of the Gulf showdown—a chance to reveal events with a critical distance impossible at the time. The documentary shows that, in the age of live and instant-check coverage, war is all too readily reduced to a high-tech, Nintendo-like game—while the bloodshed and suffering that are part of any military conflict are largely forgotten.

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# Great expectations

Robert Campeau had it all—and lost it

DOUBLE OR NOTHING: THE RISE AND FALL OF ROBERT CAMPEAU  
(CTV, Jan. 10, 9 p.m.)

Wall Street financiers loaned a lot of money to a lot of off-the-wall corporate raiders during the takeover boom of the 1980s, but few of those raiders were more volatile, or public as private, than Sullivan. Out from Robert Campeau. Born in 1923, into a poor Roman Catholic family, Campeau dropped out of high school in 14. By the early 1980s, however, he had become one of Canada's largest commercial landlords. Along the way, he married and fathered a daughter with his first wife, Claudia, and had two more children with a mistress, Rae Lambert, who became his second wife. Campeau also suffered two serious breakdowns. But in 1988, he bounced back and made the first of two colossal U.S. department store acquisitions, paying \$4.9 billion for Aldi Stores Corp. Two years later, in what *Forbes* magazine later called "The Biggest Loudest Deal Ever," Campeau borrowed \$5.9 billion and bought Federated Department Stores Inc., including its crown jewel, the Bloomingdale's chain, and the dealmaker emerged quickly collapsed, and in 1990, Campeau and his wife fled to a custom-built, \$10-million chateau in Austria.

At last glance, those events seem such material for either a tabloid (news or documentary) and in *Double or Nothing: The Rise and Fall of Robert Campeau*, Montreal-based producer, director and writer Phil Cowan combines fact with a two-hour film, the first co-production between the CTV network and the National Film Board of Canada (NFB). Cowan interviews with former Campeau associates with stylized black-and-white dramatizations of Campeau's impoverished Surrey boyhood and his early career as an Ottawa homebuilder, as well as other revelations of his high-stakes wheeling and dealing on Wall Street. The director has sold creditable his most recent film was *Julius Dornel*, an acclaimed 1988 dramatization of the life of Donald McArthur, a Nova Scotia Scotman Indian wrongly convicted of murder. But with *Double or Nothing*, Cowan has created an astonishing second that offers low new insights into one of Canada's most controversial tycoons.

Cowan acknowledges that he set himself a difficult task. In an interview, the film-maker

recalled that he rejected the idea of a conventional documentary because he felt that it would appeal only to business specialists. But he said that he also ruled out a full-length drama because, with Campeau refusing to cooperate, he would be unable to get all the background that he needed. Cowan added that he was extremely reluctant to speculate about anything that went on behind closed doors.



Roburist his empire in ruins, Campeau fled to a \$10-million chateau in Austria

"Rob is still alive and well and can therefore speak—and likes to," he said.

The filmmaker's halfway success with some of Campeau's former associates and opponents, Cowan said that he interviewed about 100 people in researching the film. A handful of those interviews make it into *Double or Nothing*, and they are the most effective scenes, particularly those with some of the principals involved in the Aldi and Federated takeovers. The most interesting is Kim Pennerberg, a slick-tongued, laugh-making former executive with The First Boston Corp., the investment bank that advised Campeau—for fees of up to \$2 million a day. Pennerberg describes the alliance as a "fraudulent dream" between "two-headed bodies" in his firm, who were eager to rub the edges of the Wall Street establishment, and Campeau, who would "just and give him a 5-year-old," but who "was good because he could ultimately be persuaded."

But before Cowan deals with Campeau's spectacular frenzy into Wall Street, he attempts to summarize Campeau's early career in Canada, and there he is far less successful. Many of the film's early sequences are brief and bewildering. In the first few minutes, Cowan jumps quickly from a black-and-white scene of Campeau as a boy at the family dinner table to a dramatization of his mother as Campeau Corp. chairman, to a quote from Pennerberg, then back to scenes of Campeau as a newspaper delivery boy in Sudbury.

Eventually, Cowan moves on to a dramatization of Campeau's unsuccessful attempt to take over Royal Trust in 1980. That bid was foiled by an alliance of established Bay Street bankers and investors who trusted Campeau, as a quote attributed to him in the film. "This is just a showcase." That failure plunged Campeau into a deep depression and led him to look south

for new opportunities. But, despite a strong performance by veteran Montreal actor Michel Robitaille as Campeau, Cowan's re-creation of the Royal Trust deal has little impact.

Cowan had a \$2-million budget, which he said is high by most standards, but not large enough to portray Campeau's lavish lifestyle in the 1980s to the detail that he would have liked. Still, many of the film's images lie in Cowan's script, which often relies on irony and satirical dramatic scenes, including one in which Campeau goes home change to a sleeping New York City derelict while a street symphony plays. The *Star-Spangled Banner*. Ultimately, the film's most valuable perspectives are Robert Campeau and the decade of greed once northern costly dramatizations, but from principles involved in his multi-billion-dollar deals that devoted their time for free.

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Ferryside, N.B.: a way of life that once formed the soul of Canadian society

## BOOKS

# A bucolic odyssey

An author explores small-town spirit

WELCOME HOME, TRAVELER  
IN SMALL-TOWN CANADA  
By Stuart McLean  
(Piking, 465 pages, \$27.95)

One of the most profound changes that Canada has undergone in the 20th century is its transformation from a rural society to a largely urban one. But in *Welcome Home, Traveler* in Small-Town Canada, Stuart McLean is concerned with the other 35 per cent. In early 1991, the *Toronto-based* journalist and CBC Radio commentator embarked on a bucolic odyssey, travelling to small towns scattered from Newfoundland to British Columbia and speaking to hundreds of people who live in them. "Mostly," McLean explains, "I wanted to write about the importance of being unimportant." The result is a book that deserves to be hugged over and over, like a chat with an old friend.

Based on two years of travel and research, *Welcome Home* is a lyrical and often moving depiction of a way of life that once formed the soul of Canadian society. The author's criteria for selecting the towns to which he travelled gave a clue to the focus of the book. "I would not, I decided, visit a town if it had a book machine," he writes. "And if I could find a bowling alley that still used pin boys, I would go too soon to that." In the end, he visited seven small towns—none of them, it turns out, with pin boys. Ferryside, an isolated Newfoundland fishing village; Sackville, N.B., a former ship-building centre turned university town; Se-

beco-Methu, Que., on the fringes of the Laurentians; Deseronto, Ont., a town on the Underpass Railroad that brought U.S. slaves to freedom in the 19th century; Powertown, a Manitoba wheat-farming community; Maple Creek, in Saskatchewan's cattle country; and Nelson, B.C., where timber is king.

What McLean finds in these widely scattered towns is a common thread, calling *Welcome Home* one of the best accounts for anyone who just returned. "I have just about all my customers by the first issue," says Deseronto pharmacist Alex MacTavish. "You can't trade that off for anything." Judge Weaver, a teacher at Powertown's 81-student public school, tells McLean that as an education here, "every year is important. Kids don't slip through the cracks." And Louise McLaughlin, formerly of Montreal, says of Sebeco-Methu, where she works in a women's drop-in center: "People think of each other. They take the time to forgive what each other feels. They take the time to love."

Delicately interwoven among the stories in *Welcome Home* is an exploration of the sense of place that grows small towns: their community spirit. Most of the people McLean talks to have their roots firmly planted in their towns—people like 76-year-old Bernard Goodwin, who inherited his Sackville diner from his father in 1923, and who says that he will in turn pass on the business to his middle-aged son, Roger. McLean rounds out the interviews with glimpses in local history, including the fight of Joseph Bonville, widely believed to have been the inspiration for Herbert Brecher's story's

book *Once There's Coffee*, from slavery in Kentucky to freedom in Deseronto. And McLean has his own encounters with Canada's vanishing past. Strolling in a graveyard in Powertown, he observes: "Even 10 years ago, I could have met men and women who saw the Pious Pilgrims, who might have heard of Lancelotti from their parents. But I am too late. What was I on busy doing?"

As he picks away the layers of small-town history and nostalgia, McLean chronicles a way of life that is increasingly threatened by agricultural mechanization, migration to the cities and the often-damaging realities of contemporary society. Especially poignant is McLean's conversation with Phoebe Kavanagh of Powertown, the Roman Catholic parish once headed by Rev. James Hickey, who in 1980 was arrested for sexual improprieties with young boys. Kavanagh tells McLean, "You can't do the things that you used to do when you were in pain. Confession, suicide, any prayers that you think you should. Then you look at the priest and you say to yourself, why should I tell him anything? He's worse than I am."

Such passages, which are interspersed with other examples of down-home humor and sensitivity to prevent *Welcome Home* from being maudlin, illustrate one of the book's strengths. McLean's ability to simply talk with people. Community buoyancy and geography. *Welcome Home* is an object lesson in the art of conversation. And as McLean puts it, "I've been the dependent things in the most unexpected places."

JOE CHIDLEY

## Maclean's

WEEKLY NEWSLITER

### ACTION

- 1 *The English Patient, Orson Welles (TV)*
- 2 *Griffin & Sabine, Deseronto (TV)*
- 3 *Solov's Notebook, Deseronto (TV)*
- 4 *Mostly Harmless, Adams (TV)*
- 5 *Good News, Montreal (TV)*
- 6 *The Tale of the Body Thief, Rose (TV)*
- 7 *Delano Goodwin, Sackville (TV)*
- 8 *Per Art's Self, Montreal*
- 9 *Angels and Insects, Deseronto (TV)*
- 10 *The Perceptions, Sebeco*

### NON-FICTION

- 1 *Homecoming, Rose (TV)*
- 2 *Welcome Home, McLean (TV)*
- 3 *Death and Deliverance, Lee (TV)*
- 4 *Emptying Things, Montreal (TV)*
- 5 *The To of Right, McLean (TV)*
- 6 *The Mother Zone, Judson (TV)*
- 7 *Shifting Gears, Rose (TV)*
- 8 *The Story of Canada, Lee, Rose and Goodwin (TV)*
- 9 *The Wives of Henry VIII, Fraser (TV)*
- 10 *Looking Around, Edgewood (TV)*

11 *Armed and Ready*

Compiled by Bruce Kirkham

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# Where pleasure outweighs duty

BY FRANCINE PELLETIER

Now that five years of controversial trials have been relegated to the dustbin of history, we're not supposed to talk this way. I know. Seeing things like "delinquent society" or "devolution of power" or, God help us, "Triple-B Society." Least of all now, as we bring in the New Year and try our damndest to be jolly. But surely talking about what makes this country tick, i.e., our differences, can't be all bad. Below are this as a New Year's resolution: I promise not to use the term *delinquent society* (it always made me think of an English letter chaser, anyway). You promise, as a change, to keep on reading. And remember this can be fun.

Imagine, then, that you have just been dumped, along with thousands of other unemployed Canadians, onto the slushy streets of Montreal. I say "dumped" because that is precisely what Mayor Lucien Maréchal, one Man of the Year and philosopher par excellence, wished he could do "discharge entire population of Canada in Senegal for about six hours."

The first thing you notice is that all of public signs are written in French. Because, obviously, they're not. Not in everyone speaking a language of Mother English, is it? And behind a glass chink of the air. No, the first thing you notice is that no one seems to recognize a red light when they see one. Not even cars. There is all this contrived movement, as if someone, who goes a long way in explaining why the streets are so slushy.

And people smile. Even when little black and red signs say not to people-drove. One a minute there, you think you are back in the 1970s when smoking was cool and the Marlboro Man hadn't yet developed lung cancer. And people talk to you in that fast, rather more loudly than you are accustomed to. "Tobacco!"

*Six times out of 10, Quebecers differed in their answers from other Canadians. Postmodern, that we are.*

is based at every street corner. (Again, you think: Is this Canada? Or New York City, where everything is perfectly natural?) You cannot help noticing, too, those tall, good-looking guys walking down the street, wearing their hips and holding hands. As gay as a Christmas parade. Last but not least, you see that Robin clothing is definitely "in" as a fashion statement and that kissing—erotic, hands, just those surprising—is "in."

Welcome to the je ne sais qui society. Or, if you prefer, postmodernism at its best. At least, that's what our most respected politicians—Michael Adams of *Intercom*, Allan Gregg of *Devenir*, Robert and Anne Gagnier of *Chimisme*, following a study conducted last year for *L'actualité* magazine on the values and behavior of Canadians. Not a single question regarding politics or language, here. Only as regards morals, habits, hopes and money. And as turns out of 10, Quebecers differed significantly in their answers from other Canadians. Postmodern, that we are.

And what, exactly, is a postmodern society? It's where people follow their nose, their conscience, and will not really be told what to do. Even by a red light. Where a sense of pleasure outweighs a sense of duty, be it religious,

patriotic or otherwise. It's where life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, you might say, override peace, order and good government. Asked if they preferred people who sought not their own happiness for example, or those with their nose to the grindstone, 63 per cent of English-speaking Canadians chose the grindstone while 51 per cent of francophone Quebecers chose happiness.

This does not mean, of course, that Quebecers are usually a happier bunch. (These days especially.) It simply means that Quebecers, and francophones most of all, have a rather different frame of mind. More narcissistic and less devout, if you will. And at times downright shallow.

Quebecers, for example, Canada's champagne cocktail potatoes, are lazy when it comes to sex, reading books or working for their community. They aren't all that turned on to the environment, and they love to spend money. In fact, 71 per cent of Quebecers believe counting is one of the "great pleasures in life," compared with only 51 per cent in the rest of Canada.

But it also means that Quebecers are more tolerant as a rule. Be it homosexual, abortion, sex relations or even burning the flag. Quebecers are far more likely to abuse and, say, *jeu de la mort* than elsewhere in Canada. Seventy-seven per cent of English-speaking Canadians, for example, believe flag-burning should be illegal, compared to only 50 per cent of Quebecers. People of *la belle province* also believe that love is a more-soudered thing and that marriage, well, isn't. Ninety-two per cent of Canadians living elsewhere believe marriage is "very important," compared to 68 per cent living in Quebec.

And the best part is... The moral of the story is this: while the epic Quebec-Canada constitutional struggle has been pitted in terms of collective versus individual rights, Quebecers are actually the greatest individualists and even, the greater supporters of individual rights. Now, don't cringe and go jumping over your boards. This is not a lie. Simply a fact that deserves a little more exposure, that's all, something to remember next time someone accuses Quebec of being so-called traitors.

The fact of the matter is, Quebec is more individual-minded and the rest of Canada more collective-minded is a generally given credit. In other words, the whole story isn't always being told here. Who knows, for example, that anglophone Quebecers, the often-maligned victims of our language wars, are actually strong on top of this country?

In *L'actualité*'s study, at least, anglophone Quebecers come out smiling like fools. A lot of miracle stories that combine the tolerance and joy de vivre of francophone Quebecers with the sense of responsibility and fair play of other Canadians.

Now isn't that good news?

It means we can actually roll off on one another, if only we get close enough.

Francine Pelletier is a freelance journalist and columnist in Montreal.



## You'll be pleased to know that back pain treatment has come a long way.

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